THE NEW DEMOCRAT

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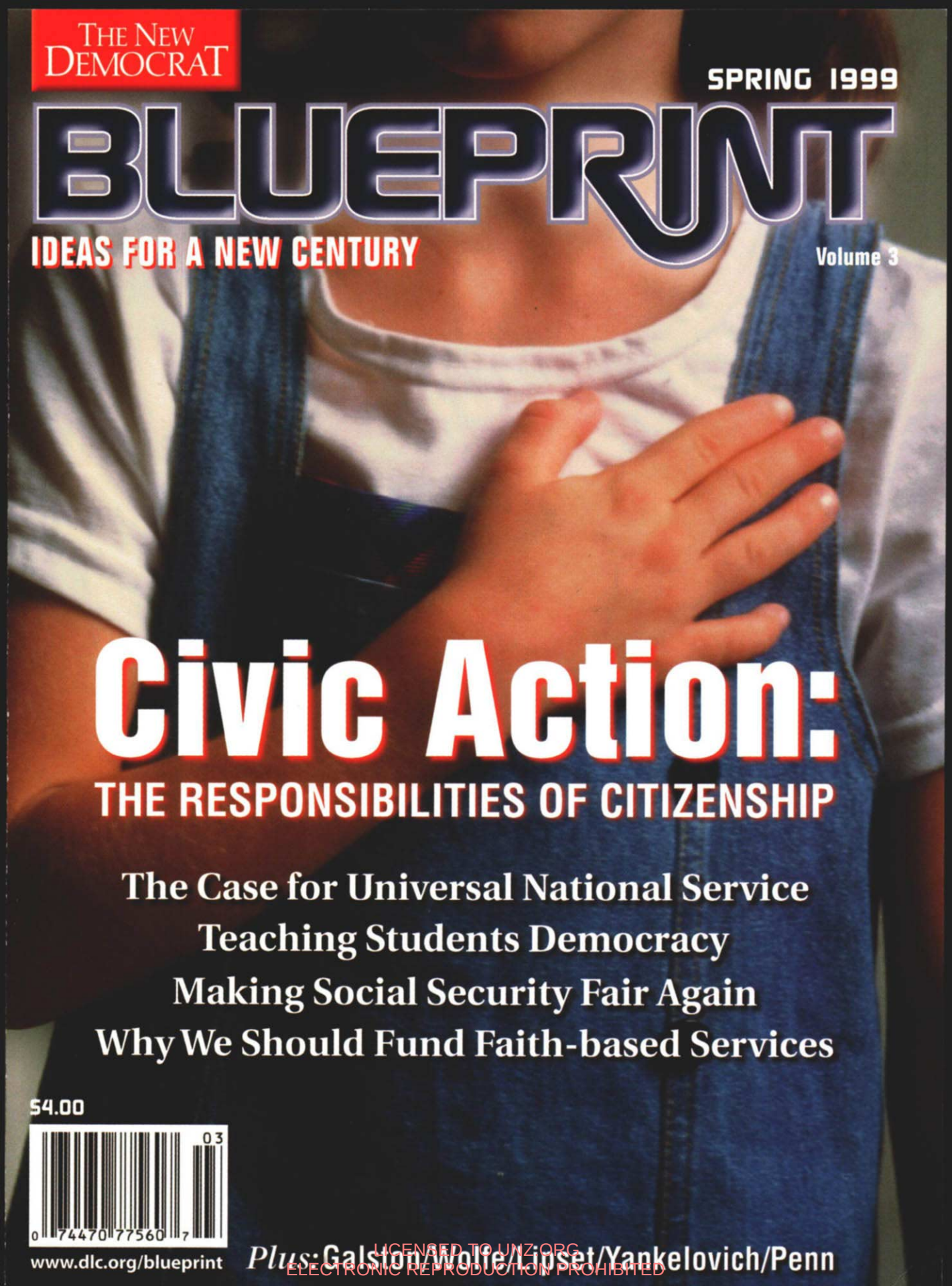
IDEAS FOR A NEW CENTURY

Volume 3



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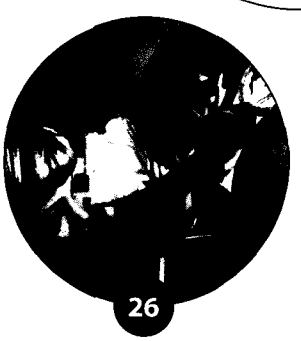

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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of this past decade, New Democrats all across the nation have been reshaping American government based on our core values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. Now, as we look back at the 1990s, we see more Americans having more opportunities than ever before and more Americans — of all walks of life — exercising personal responsibility. But though large strides have been taken, the drive to strengthen community — to reinforce Americans' sense of civic responsibility — is part of the great unfinished business of the New Democrat movement.

American democracy rests on a balance between what our country can do for us and what we can do for our country. Through much of this century, the Democratic Party was a guardian of this balance.

In the 1970s and '80s, however, this credo of reciprocity waned and we seemed to lose our way. But in the 1990s — under New Democrat leadership — we have seen the budding of a more stable symmetry between opportunity and obligation. Now we must help that new balance bloom.

Despite all our progress, too many Americans think the "give and take" of democracy involves only "take." Too often our popular culture confuses rights and what's right. Too frequently our political debates descend into wars between "every man for himself" and "something for nothing" — the crude brands of individualism practiced by economic conservatives and social liberals.

Americans are hungering for something larger than either entitlement or abandonment — something bigger than the "get mine and get out" greed of both poles of the traditional political spectrum. The time is ripe for a new politics that builds on mutual obligations and builds up new civic institutions.

America's civic life is in a moment of transition — but this transition should not be confused with an inevitable decline. As he grew old, Thomas Jefferson looked toward America's future and saw "large

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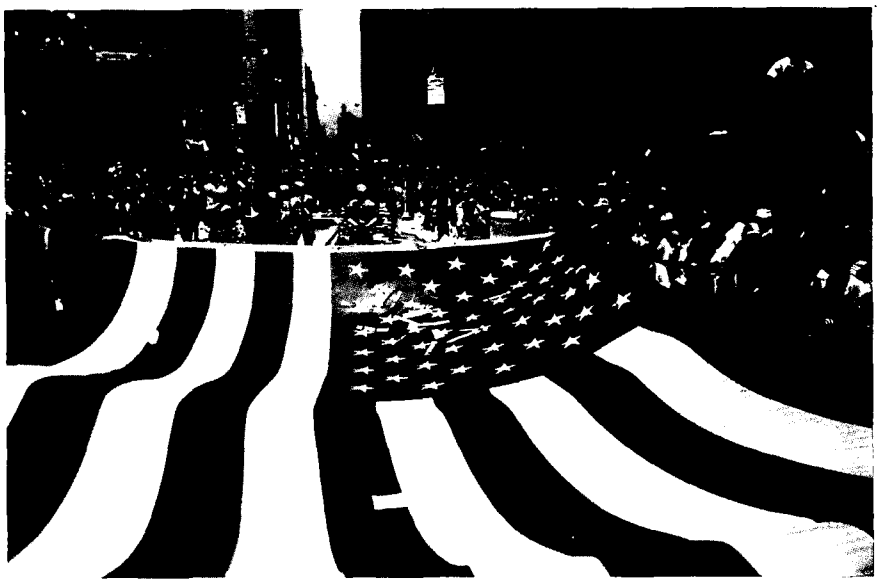

cities as pestilence to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man." Here Jefferson was wrong. Our resilient civic life adapted to an urban and industrial era with new institutions and different forms of public action. Today, our challenge is to rethink civic life anew for an America that is increasingly suburban and where technological progress can be used to either bring people closer together or pull them further apart.

The next agenda for civic life is built on a revitalization of the responsibilities of American citizenship, including these steps:

- Calling on young people to begin their adult lives by giving service to the nation and its communities — bringing Americans together to tackle common concerns at the grassroots.

- Instituting a Democracy Education graduation requirement for all high school students — a common rite of passage that would both ask students to provide service to the community and to learn about our civic heritage.

- Redefining the means of government action from a sole reliance on bureaucratic systems driven by mandates and focused on processes to the empowerment of charitable, voluntary, and faith-based institutions that are held accountable to the public and focused on results.

- Introducing a new ethic of reciprocity into all government programs — so that all Americans, from the poor to the powerful corporations, see that their role in political life is not just taking from a government cash register but contributing to a shared commonwealth.

The time has come to reinvent not just how government does things but what government does; to demand that all Americans live up to their responsibilities as citizens to each other and to their country; and to tap America's vibrant civic tradition to meet the challenges of a new century.✧

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Ideas that work . . .

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TRADITIONAL VALUES

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PRESIDENT CLINTON

REPLACING WELFARE

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

The challenges ahead . . .

NEW CHALLENGES

NEW QUESTIONS

"We must continue to modernize and renew ourselves — we constantly look for new paths to the oldest truths — to find ways to meet the challenges of change without changing what is so fundamental to our values in our families, and in ourselves . . . Together let's continue the journey of hope and progress that the DLC has done so much to inspire."

Democratic Leadership Council

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The Challenge

In every moment of transformation, our civic life has adapted to new conditions.

Today's challenge is no different: to build on America's core values and the positive progress of the past generation, while strengthening the credo of reciprocal responsibilities.

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Where We Stand

By William A. Galston

The past generation has witnessed an expansion of traditional American values of freedom, individual rights, and equal opportunity — and the enhanced appeal of these values around the world. Belief in the "American creed" remains strong. Most Americans are comfortable with the movement toward social equality over the past generation and have no desire to turn the clock back. Most of us believe that freedom is working, and personal optimism is high.

But while Americans cherish personal liberty and celebrate its expansion, we are troubled by some of its consequences. As we have become a high-choice society, important social bonds have weakened. Many scholars believe that this tension between individual choice and social solidarity is unavoidable and that the best we can do is to strike a workable balance between them. But in America today, this tension is a source of deep ambivalence.

William A. Galston is Professor, School of Public Affairs, the University of Maryland, and Director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy. From 1993 until 1995, he was Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy for President Bill Clinton.

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We take pride in the expansion of tolerance in our society, but we wonder whether the remaining moral norms are strong enough to restrain the abuse of personal liberty. We cherish individualism and rights, but we worry about their consequences for community and responsibility. As our political institutions have weakened and individualistic political entrepreneurship has become the norm, a rupture has occurred between the government and the people, especially young adults. We feel economically prosperous but civically impoverished.

Our ambivalence shapes — and complicates — the task of renewing our civic life. We want to strengthen the bonds that connect us to one another, but not at the expense of hard-won individual rights and liberties. We are reluctant to enforce the norms we endorse. So while Americans are deeply troubled about family breakdown, we are worried about enacting tougher divorce laws. While we are convinced that teen pregnancy and out-of-wedlock birth are negative for our society, we hesitate to implement policies that would stigmatize individuals engaging in this behavior. While we want stronger social bonds in neighborhoods and among citizens, we hesitate to use coercion to foster them.

There is no way of dissolving the tension between individual choice and social solidarity. But we can strike a better balance between them. To do this, we must emphasize an ethic of reciprocity and mutual responsibility throughout our society. The reason is simple: A good society does not descend like manna from heaven. It is built and sustained through the efforts of its citizens. No society can long survive on the principle of "something for nothing." If we receive something of value (whether from our neighbors or our government), we must be prepared to give something back. The practice of reciprocity won't limit our liberties. On the contrary, it will strengthen the framework of institutions, beliefs, and bonds that secures the exercise of rights.

The challenge of renewing our civic life through the ethic of reciprocity is made even more important by the dramatic changes we have experienced during the past generation. The end of the Cold War has diminished the felt importance of politics, especially at the national level. The New Economy has weakened the bonds of loyalty that once linked corporations and their employees. Technological innovations — especially information technology — have changed the ways that Americans interact and associate with one another. Fifty-four percent of all students entering college this year participate in Internet chat rooms; 83 percent are using the Internet for research. By the year 2000, it is likely that half of all American households will be on-line. Technological change is putting pressure on institutions throughout our society, including the political parties and media networks that once helped organize our public agenda and discussion. As Mark Penn's survey makes clear [see p. 44], we are sharply divided about the impact — both current and long-term — of these new technologies on the fabric of our social and civic life.

America's Values at Century's End

To renew a civic life based on mutual responsibility, we must begin from where we are. While our values have changed significantly during the past generation, many of the principles and beliefs that make us distinctive remain intact.

1) American exceptionalism is alive and well, and the "American creed" remains strong.

As compared with other economically developed

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nations, Americans continue to emphasize individual freedom and rights, personal responsibility rather than government responsibility, equality of opportunity rather than results, and an ethic of dynamism and risk-taking over that of stability and security. Our historic preference for local over national political institutions, suspended during the period from the beginning of the New Deal to the end of the Cold War, has now reasserted itself. We remain near the top in voluntary activity (82 percent of Americans belong to at least one voluntary association), and we continue to register very high levels of religious faith and observance.

In overwhelming numbers, Americans express a deep patriotism and abiding faith in our constitutional order as the best system of government. We distinguish sharply between our political institutions, which we regard as fundamentally sound, and the performance of most politicians, of whom we are sharply critical. And in spite of much recent hand-wringing about the "balkanization" of America, the evidence suggests far more agreement than disagreement about basic values and public purposes across lines of race and ethnicity, and between longstanding and newly arrived citizens. More than 90 percent of all Americans endorse democracy, patriotism, acceptance of people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, honesty, courage, caring for friends and family, and the Golden Rule as basic values that should be taught in our schools.

2) Most Americans are comfortable with the progress toward social equality and inclusion over the past generation and have no desire to turn the clock back.

By very large and increasing margins, Americans endorse steps to secure racial justice, equal opportunities for women, tolerance for cultural differences, the inclusion of all ethnic and immigrant groups in the story of America, and the "mainstreaming" of formerly marginalized groups such as Americans with disabilities. Not surprisingly, political and social movements perceived as moralistic and intolerant tend to command only minority support.

3) Most Americans believe that freedom is working for them and their families, and personal optimism is high.

Satisfaction with economic circumstances and prospects is at a record high, and most Americans believe that the New Economy and today's society offer more choices for more individuals than ever before. This personal optimism is strengthening a new ethic of self-reliance — the belief in resilient, adaptable individuals rather than stable and dependable institutions — that is especially intense among young Americans. For example, a recent Wall Street Journal/NBC survey indicated that 75 percent of GenXers believe that individual workers should be allowed to direct the investment of a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes, compared to only 39 percent of New Dealers.

As recently as a decade ago, this emphasis on individual freedom — a key element of American

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exceptionalism — was widely seen as a problem hindering our ability to compete effectively with more solidaristic nations such as Germany and Japan. Today, this worry has been turned on its head. There is evidence that this distinctive complex of values — freedom, flexibility, innovation, self-reliance, a strong belief in opportunity and social mobility — is especially well-suited both to individual success in the New Economy and to the ability of nations to take advantage of emerging economic possibilities.

4) While Americans cherish personal freedom and celebrate its expansion, they are troubled by some of its consequences — for families, neighborhoods, communities, and to some extent for workers as well.

In the economic sphere, after eight years of growth that have brought us to the lowest unemployment rates in a generation, anxiety about long-term job loss is actually higher today than it was in the 1980s. Many workers feel more disposable than they once did, and increased economic flexibility comes at the cost of weakened bonds of loyalty between workers and their employers. Many Americans are also troubled by the perception that increased economic mobility has diminished the sense of responsibility businesses once felt for their local communities.

Social trends of the past generation viewed negatively by most Americans include rising rates of crime, welfare dependency, divorce, teen sexual intercourse, out-of-wedlock births, and fatherless families, coupled with a perceived decline of the ties of connection and loyalty in neighborhoods and workplaces. During the 1990s, many of these trends have begun to improve. Teen sex, births to teens, illegitimacy, divorce, crime, and welfare dependency have all declined significantly. But these positive developments have yet to register in changed attitudes — in part because beliefs tend to change more slowly than actual conditions, and in part because many improved indicators still register social pathologies at levels higher than a generation ago, and much higher than most Americans regard as satisfactory.

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Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of American public opinion at century's end is the pervasiveness of moral concerns. Sixty-two percent identify a decline in moral values as one of the "major causes of our problems today." One piece of conventional wisdom is that this reflects the improved economy and decline of economic concerns. But in fact moral concerns have dominated material concerns for nearly all of the past decade, in good economic times and bad.

Another piece of conventional wisdom discounts expression of moral concern on the grounds that Americans always believe that morality is in decline and that things were better in some earlier time. This is at most partly true. In 1937, for example, 45 percent of Americans believed that values had weakened over the past generation. Today, that figure is at 76 percent. As recently as 25 years ago, Americans were about evenly divided between optimism and pessimism concerning the future of moral and ethical standards in our country. Today, the pessimists dominate by 2 to 1. Not surprisingly, 66 percent of Americans are now more worried that the country will become too tolerant of behavior that is bad for society rather than too intolerant, versus only 28 percent who fear intolerance more.

There is evidence of widespread public desire for a new balance between rights and responsibilities, self-expression and self-restraint, individual freedom and older norms of connection and solidarity. Fifty-five percent of Americans now say that it is more important to defend standards of right and wrong than to extend individual rights; 76 percent prefer being tough on criminals to protecting the rights of the accused.

Young people — the coming generation of leaders — seem to have an especially strong desire for such a recalibration. The percentage of college freshmen who say that there is too much concern for criminals has risen from 50 percent in 1970 to 70 percent today. Fourty-three percent of freshmen (including 53 percent of women) believe that material on the Internet should be regulated by the government. Acceptance of casual sex is also down to a record low of 40 percent, compared to a high of 52 percent in 1987. And numerous surveys conducted over the past decade have documented the burning desire of young Americans to give their children and spouses stabler marriages and family lives than their baby-boomer parents provided them. Young Americans — indeed, most Americans — see weakened families not just as a source of personal unhappiness, but as a key obstacle to civic renewal.

5) Americans' view of their political institutions (and of large institutions in general) has become much more negative during the past generation, leading to a deep rupture between the people and their government.

This represents a profound change in American politics. During the New Deal, only one-third of the people felt that too much power was concentrated in Washington. Now, two-thirds feel that way. As recently as 1973, only 32 percent agreed that "the best government is one that governs the least." Today, 56 percent agree. While there has been a significant increase during the past six years in the percentage of Americans who say that they are basically satisfied with the way the federal government works, the bond between citizens and governing institutions has not been repaired. The fraction of citizens who say they trust the federal government to do what's right has been cut in half during the past generation and now stands at only 31 percent.

The gap between citizens and public institutions is especially large among young people, and it is continuing to widen. For example, only 39 percent of Americans age 18 to 29 believe that elected officials are trustworthy, compared to 56 percent of Americans aged 65 or older. This finding is significant because younger Americans' perception of government is more heavily influenced by their evaluation of public officials, and less by government performance,

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than is the case for older Americans. Not surprisingly, a recent survey of nearly 276,000 entering college freshmen found political interest and involvement at record lows. Only 26 percent feel that keeping up with political affairs is important, compared with 58 percent a generation ago. Social scientists worry that the negative impressions of politics characteristic of today's young Americans may shape political attitudes and behavior throughout their adult lives.

The ruptured bond between citizens and their political institutions has led to a view of government as dominated by "them" rather than sustained by "us." Today, 61 percent believe that the government doesn't care what average citizens think, and 66 percent feel that elected officials quickly lose touch with ordinary Americans and their everyday problems. A generation ago, only 29 percent felt that government was dominated by and run for the benefit of the special interests; today, 74 percent feel that way. Not surprisingly, citizens are far less likely to vote out of a sense of civic duty (or for any other reason) than they were a generation ago, and many other forms of political participation have decreased as well.

John F. Kennedy urged citizens to ask what they could do for their country, not what their country could do for them; today, few political leaders suggest that anything should be required of citizens, as a matter of duty to the community or even in return for generous benefits provided by the community. Perhaps our leaders fear that if they propose policies based on reciprocity, the people will turn against them. If so, Mark Penn's survey suggests that they are underestimating the people and that there is a widespread desire (perhaps even a hunger) for public policies more closely aligned with common-sense moral principles.

Our Challenge: Renewing Civic Life by Moving to a New Ethic of Reciprocity

The disruption of the relation between citizens and their government has not extended to our society as a whole. By many measures, levels of civil association and civic activity at the local level remain high, even among young people who are most likely to have tuned out official politics. A record number of college freshmen report volunteering their time during their last year of high school — 74 percent, up from 62 percent a decade ago. And more than occasionally: 42 percent volunteered at least weekly, up from 27 percent a decade ago.

As Mark Penn's survey shows, young Americans are not satisfied with the condition of our civic life. They are more likely than older citizens to believe that Americans do not live up to their public responsibilities and that there should be more emphasis on

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community. And they are more likely than others to support government actions designed to strengthen civic life — even when that means making civic education and service mandatory as graduation requirements for all high school students.

In rejecting the view that voluntary activities will be enough to solve our nation's problems, younger Americans are in agreement with their fellow-citizens. Although we believe (as we have since early in our national history) that social progress begins at home, in families, neighborhoods, and local communities, we do not believe that it ends there. Fully 72 percent of Americans believe that America's social problems can be best addressed through closer collaboration between government and voluntary associations (religious and charitable), versus only 16 percent who think that the voluntary sector can successfully go it alone. Americans do not believe that government is irrelevant; they want a government that acts intelligently to revitalize citizenship and civic life. But they are not yet convinced that their government is doing that very well.

In his first inaugural address, President Clinton declared that there is nothing wrong with America that cannot be fixed by what is right with America. And there is so much that is right. We care about our country; we know that freedom works, but only when family and community bonds are strong; we are willing to contribute to the community when we believe that our efforts will make a difference. Our task — the task of political leaders and ordinary citizens alike — is to build on these strengths by renewing an ethic of reciprocity throughout our civic life.✧

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Civic Deregulation

If government can't pick winners over losers, can we trust it to pick right over wrong?

by Alan Wolfe

Americans, we are told by both the right and the left, are facing a crisis of values. They have lost their sense of civility. They no longer believe in old-fashioned virtues such as courage, honesty, and loyalty. They divorce too often, and they bowl alone. Increasingly withdrawn and selfish, they are a poor comparison to the generation that survived the Great Depression and fought World War II.

Even if one believes all or most of these charges, the question remains: What can be done about them? And when that question is asked, the first instinct of the policy wonk — get government involved — may not always be the most appropriate.

Republicans — the party of suspicion toward government in economic matters — usually become the party of regulation in moral matters. This has traditionally been the case when the subjects of moral regulation are the poor: The conservative response to pregnant teenagers, out-of-control drug addicts, underperforming students, or unrepentant criminals has been to call for a "new paternalism" in which government would insist on such important virtues as self-discipline and personal responsibility. But in recent years the conservative complaint about moral relativism has dug deeper. Now it is the entire baby boom generation, exemplified by the President of the United States, that has been found morally wanting.

In responding to America's crisis of values, Republicans ought to learn the lesson taught by conservative critics of industrial policy. The state ought not to be in the business of picking winners and losers, those critics maintain. When it acts, government is all thumbs and no fingers. To believe that its weight is preferable to the lighter touch of the market is to ensure that economic inefficiency will triumph over entrepreneurial energy.

If government has problems picking winners and losers, can we trust it to pick right over wrong? To some degree we must. Government is the most important symbol we have for our common identity as a people. If government abdicates making judgments between right and wrong on such fundamental matters as criminality or sobriety, it sends a signal to people that these are matters about which they need not concern themselves. Even worse, when government gets involved in morality on the wrong side — for example, by encouraging people to gamble — it undercuts the values people need to lead worthy lives. Just as the sheer size and nature of government means that it will always favor some kinds of industrial policy, government cannot avoid being involved in moral policy.

This means that government must do what it can to ensure alignment between public policies and moral premises broadly endorsed by the people. For instance, it was the misalignment of values and policy that undermined public support for the pre-1996 welfare laws. Americans objected to welfare not because it spent too much money on the poor, but because it violated basic moral precepts of fairness, mutual obligation, and the importance of work. This also means that government may seek to create or enhance opportunities for individuals and groups to act civically in ways that reflect their moral commitments — for example, through national service or partnerships with community organizations. It certainly means that our locally controlled system of public education may seek to teach core civic values that enjoy overwhelming support.

Still, there are good reasons why the hand of government ought to be light. One of them is that the American public distrusts too active an involvement of government in moral matters. That, at least, is what I discovered in the research for my book *One Nation, After All.* As much as Americans love morality, they also distrust politics. Most Americans make a fairly sharp distinction between the private sector and the public sector when it comes to moral matters. They think they ought to do right themselves, and they believe they have an obligation to help others make the right choices. But they worry when government points its finger at people and compels them to act in some ways rather than others. This is especially true when government intrudes into moral matters most Americans regard as personal. But the concern about government is at work to some extent even when the people see the moral issue at stake as civic rather than personal.

Americans believe in both liberty and equality, and they worry when the pursuit of one negates the value of the other. Too much governmental involvement in morality, however, can undermine both. By its very nature, government interferes with liberty, and while we may not think much of the liberty involved in abusing spouses or destroying one's chances to become a productive worker, we will have to worry about where the line should be drawn before governmental scrutiny kicks in: after three drinks at the country club? more than one divorce? insufficient attention to public affairs? One person's immorality is always another person's freedom.

And that is why excessive government regulation of morality can also violate principles of equality. For if, in a diverse society, there is no one morality but rather many different moralities, government will have to make choices. And if the poor believe that government makes the choices preferred by the rich — or blacks those of whites or women those of men — we will find that the same frustrating debates which have dominated our universities will come to dominate our public life.

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None of this is meant to suggest that America faces no crisis of values and ought to turn away from questions that involve character, discipline, involvement, and personal responsibility. It is to suggest that in this area as in so many others, it is sometimes easier to make the correct diagnosis than it is to find the appropriate cure.✧

Alan Wolfe teaches political science and sociology at Boston University and is the author of **One Nation, After All.**

What's Fair?

The meaning of fairness has changed.
Now it's: no more something for nothing.

by Daniel Yankelovich

In these morally turbulent times, the public craves social policies based on the principle of reciprocity. This principle has become important to voters because it has come to mean fairness — and fairness is the key to morally acceptable social policy. The rediscovery of the ancient principle of reciprocity is a recent development in American politics, which is why it has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

Reciprocity became the moral powerhouse it is today as a consequence of a three-decades-long struggle between two competing conceptions of fairness — fairness based on getting what you deserve and fairness based on getting what you need. Once, voters judged policies as fair or unfair depending on whether people "get what they deserve." If someone commits a crime, he deserves to be punished. If someone does a good job, she deserves to be rewarded. The link between fairness and deserving has long historical roots in American culture.

But in the 1960s and 1970s, a very different conception of fairness — fairness based on need — came into prominence, reflecting the belief that society has a moral obligation to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. This communal concern with people's needs was implemented through laws that codified certain needs as legal "rights." This doctrine of need-based legal rights is generally known as "entitlement legislation." It holds that people in need of the fundamentals of life are legally entitled to have these needs met and that the state is legally obligated to meet them.

One consequence was to imbue the public with a psychology of entitlement: "I have a right to the best medical care that money can buy whether or not I can afford it." "I need a good education and therefore have a right to one." "I am entitled to comfort and security in my old age."

When people have a legal right to a benefit, they endow it with moral fervor. The obligation on the part of the state is deemed unconditional, irrespective of resources. When this obligation is scanted, people feel cheated. They are filled with a brooding sense of injustice and victimization. Ironically, what started as a moral conviction in the 1960s — that people must not think only of themselves but must also take care of others — ended up by the 1980s as a preoccupation with the self, its needs and its rights.

Initially, the idea of fairness defined in terms of need-based rights seemed as acceptable to the public as the older, more traditional conceptions of fairness based on desert. In response to surveys, the prevailing attitude was: "I am doing OK. Why shouldn't those in need get a break?"

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, this attitude began to change. In the worrisome economic climate of the early 1990s, the attitude was: "Times are tough. My family and I are struggling to make ends meet. People should no longer expect something for nothing. Above all, they certainly should not expect something for nothing *as a matter of right*."

Gradually, voters began to settle on reciprocity as a way to keep faith with the traditional idea of deserving while at the same time recognizing our society's moral obligation to those in need. By the mid-1990s, the majority of Americans had arrived at three conclusions about fairness: 1) If we are to be a compassionate and just society, it is only fair that we support a safety net for the needy. 2) But it is not fair to put material benefits such as welfare, housing subsidies, health care, and education in the same category of moral/legal rights as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. 3) It is only fair that people should give something back for these moral benefits, if they are mentally and physically able to do so.

These conclusions satisfy the moral dilemma of the majority because they include elements of both definitions of fairness. They retain the idea of deserving because in reciprocity you must do something to "deserve" the benefit you receive. (Social Security is regarded as fair because Americans spend most of their working life paying for it.) And they honor the society's obligations to those in need without falling into the trap of assigning a high moral or legal value to getting something for nothing.

Throughout this decade — in recession and prosperity alike — the moral voice of the American people has been clear: They are demanding that the ethic of reciprocity undergird our public policies. All evidence shows that this is a demand that they will continue to make in the years ahead.✧

Daniel Yankelovich is President of the Public Agenda Foundation and Chairman of DYG Inc., a research firm. His newest book,* The Magic of Dialogue, *will be published by Simon & Schuster this fall.

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An Exceptional Nation

As in Tocqueville's day, America is more anti-statist, egalitarian, and moralistic than other nations.

by Seymour Martin Lipset

More than a century and a half ago, Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States curious as to why the American Revolution had succeeded in creating a functioning democracy while the French Revolution had failed. His masterpiece, *Democracy in America*, is still recognized as the best analytical work on America's society and polity. Beyond his acute intelligence and powers of observation, the secret to his achievement was the comparative method. He sought to understand the United States in relation to Europe. In so doing, he concluded that the United States was exceptional in its institutions and organizing principles.

Almost all the nations of Europe had powerful monarchies, established state churches, economically and politically potent aristocracies, highly inegalitarian class structures, and populations whose right to move was restrained and whose opportunities to secure an education were limited. The United States was different in every respect.

Tocqueville emphasized the uniqueness of class relationships in a new settler society taking shape in a nation framed by revolutionary ideas of equality. These ideas did not mean equality of income or condition, but rather equality of opportunity and of social relations. Social and geographic mobility were pervasive; no one was required to show deference to others — or to demand it — because of accidents of birth or even of status achieved through personal effort.

Finally, Tocqueville stressed America's uniquely vigorous civil society: its strong religious beliefs and institutions, determined by the voluntary (non-established) organization of its many denominations; its high level of participation in voluntary associations; and its emphasis on the local community.

Much has changed here and elsewhere since the 1830s. Yet, the United States continues to differ from other economically advanced democracies in many of the ways Tocqueville described. America's state remains less powerful, while its private sector is stronger and more productive. Americans are much more anti-statist and more egalitarian across lines of social class. Americans continue to display significantly higher levels of belief in traditional religious doctrines than do the citizens of other advanced democracies. While moralism concerning non-marital sex and others' behaviors is clearly in decline, it is still stronger here than elsewhere. The fact that political sex scandals do not provoke severe public reactions dismays the minority of fervent religious traditionalists. But the fact that they have occasioned as much public outcry and political turmoil as they have both bewilders and amuses the much less moralistic Europeans.

In spite of some recent signs of decline, America's civil society remains vigorous and distinctive. Americans attend church more frequently and are more likely to participate in voluntary organizations of all kinds. And while the balance of power in America's federal system has shifted significantly since Tocqueville's time, most Americans still trust local governments and communities far more than national institutions.

American exceptionalism is double-edged. In part because our spirit of equality and liberty is so strong, social norms and bonds tend to be weak. We lead in a number of negative traits such as violent crime, incarceration, drug abuse, and family breakdown. And in part because of our strong anti-state tradition (and vigorous private economy and civil society), we tend not to vote as regularly as do the citizens of other advanced democracies: More than 50 percent of our citizens fail to participate in presidential elections, with many more abstaining from state, local, and primary contests.

But it would be wrong to infer that American life has become wholly atomized or privatized. On the contrary, Americans continue to band together in mass movements to reform their society and the world. Most of the movements that swept through the world in recent decades — saving the environment, equal rights for women, social inclusion for all citizens regardless of race and sexual orientation — first emerged in America. It would not be far-fetched to see these moral movements as the heirs of the American tradition of religious "great awakenings" that have periodically swept our society.

As we seek to fortify our social and civic life in the new century, Tocqueville's description of America is still a good guide. Not only do we remain the most moralistic of Western societies, we are also the least statist, the least deferential to public authority, and the most involved in voluntary associations and charitable activities. Our social norms can only be strengthened in ways consistent with our commitments to liberty and equality; our civic life can only be renewed in ways that respect our historic commitment to civil society and reservations about the public sector. This is not to say that government has no role to play in reinvigorating citizenship. But to be effective, government must tread lightly, act as a catalyst rather than an overseer, and maximize respectful collaboration with voluntary associations and local communities.✧

Seymour Martin Lipset, past President of the American Political Science Association and the American Sociological Association, is Hazel Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University and Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His forthcoming book,* It Didn't Happen Here, *discusses the failure of socialism in America.

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The Solution

Renewing our civic life and strengthening civic responsibilities can't be done without new thinking that boldly breaks with the status-quo:

- Build towards universal national citizen service by increasing the number of servers to one million in the next five years.
- Requiring all high school graduates to take a course in Democracy Education — the tools with which to be active citizens.
- Strengthening the role of neighborhood and faith-based organizations in American life.
- Building on the success of welfare reform by applying the rule of reciprocity to our unfair and unbalanced entitlement programs.

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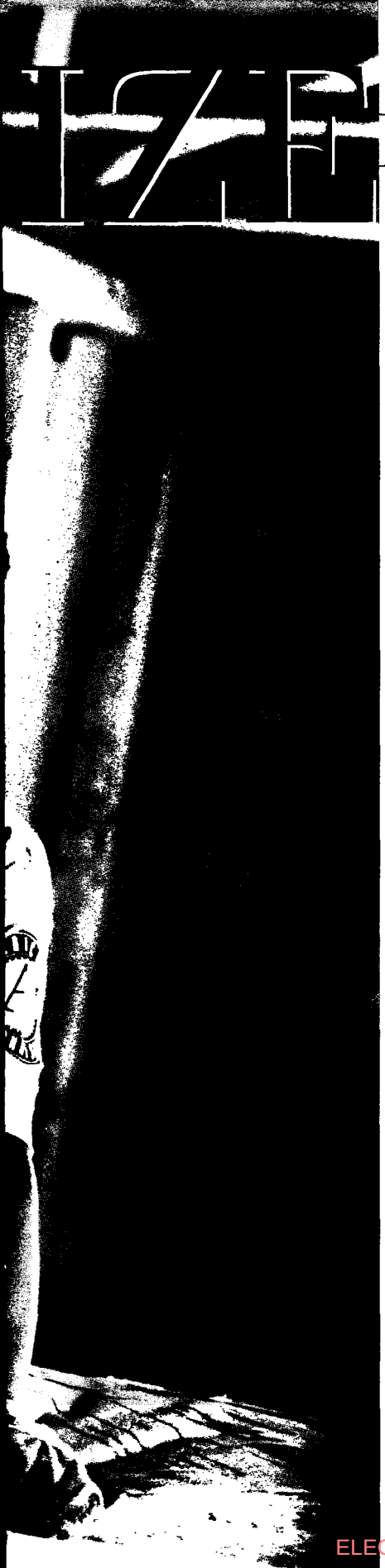

NATIONAL SERVICE

By Steven Waldman

There's never been any question that in time of war or crisis, Americans give generously to country and community. Times of prosperity have stirred more complicated reactions. Many people find themselves better able to help others when they themselves are doing well. On the other hand, there is little sense of urgency about the need for collective action. But the obligations of citizenship — and the importance of gratitude — should span good times and bad.

The persistence of a hard-core group of poor Americans, the scandalous quality of schools in certain pockets of the country, the strains placed on some families by the aging of the population — these are not minor problems. Nor are they easily solved. In most cases, one-on-one assistance, not the mailing of a government check, is required — citizen rather than bureaucratic action.

There's another challenge to face as well. Despite expanded opportunity for many Americans, social fragmentation by class and race has persisted. Even largely-positive developments like suburbanization and the technology boom have had the effect of making it easier for people to interact mostly with those like themselves. This is disturbing. It's hard to imagine democracy

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Steven Waldman is the founding editor of Belief Magazine, a new non-denominational, mass-circulation publication on religion, spirituality, and morality. He has been National Editor of US News & World Report, National Correspondent for Newsweek, and senior advisor to Harris Wofford at the Corporation for National Service. He is also the author of **The Bill,** ***a book about the passage of the law creating AmeriCorps.***

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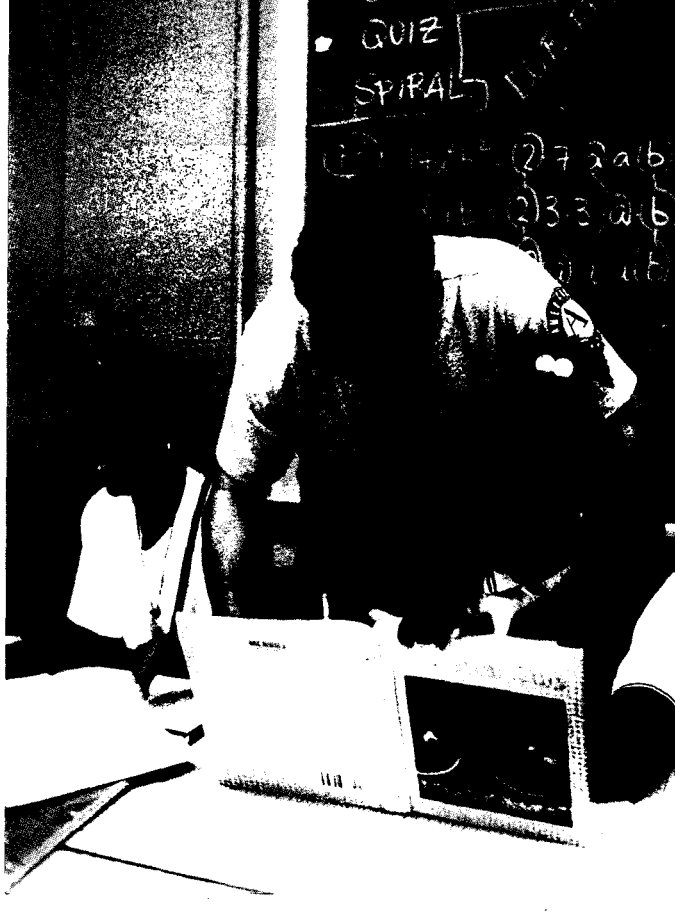
functioning well if people don't have a rich understanding of their fellow citizens. Anyone who's served on a jury in an urban area knows that divisions among race and class lines can paralyze deliberations.

National service is the only approach that can solve all three of these problems. Whether or not it is compulsory, some form of national service should be universal — a common expectation that young Americans have for themselves. This can't happen overnight, but by 2004 we can provide a million young people the opportunity for national service.

In 1993, following Bill Clinton's campaign promise of giving college aid to those who did a year or two of community service, Congress created AmeriCorps. Over the past six years, 100,000 Americans have served their country through AmeriCorps — with 41,000 new members now serving each year.



AmeriCorps members are not only doing nice work, but, often, important work. Typical is the reading program in Houston that has used AmeriCorps members to tutor and recruit volunteers to tutor, the result being an average two-grade improvement in reading among more than 2,000 children. A program in Portland provides traumatized victims of crime help navigating the criminal justice system. Since 1994, AmeriCorps members have taught, tutored, or mentored more than two million children, operated after-school programs for roughly half-a-million low-income children, helped more than 200,000 senior citizens live independently, planted 52 million trees, and created 40,000 "safe zones" in neighborhoods and schools. With initiatives like these, service has become an important force in solving problems.

AmeriCorps is filled with people who simply never would have worked together — or even spoken to each other — but for the service experience. The experience of jointly trying to fix a roof or build a playground erodes biases. The key, as with the military, is that people are not brought together for the purpose of being brought together. They come together to solve a mutual problem. In the process, they become mutually dependent.

But despite AmeriCorps' success, it has not come anywhere close to having the impact on our country that the draft or the GI Bill had. Those two experiences allowed a large percentage of young people to **a)** serve their country and develop an "ethic of obligation," **b)** solve pressing problems, and **c)** combat balkanization.

While millions benefitted from the GI Bill, only about one percent of 18 year olds have had the AmeriCorps experience — hardly enough to transform a cultural ethos. While AmeriCorps has established the principle that at least some government benefits should be tied to giving something back to the community, almost all of college aid is still given out according to other criteria, primarily need and academic merit. Finally, since such a small percentage of people have done AmeriCorps, its role in combating balkanization has been meager. To put it in pedestrian terms, we are not going to change the way Americans view each other until the experience becomes so common, so universal that, say, a taxicab driver can regularly

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"National service should be universal — a common expectation that young Americans have for themselves."

exchange notes with his passengers about which service program each had served in. That was the norm after World War II, when the driver and his passenger were equally likely to have served.

So the question before us now is whether service to the nation will become, in fact, national; whether this good idea will do more than have a big impact on a relatively small number of Americans and instead operate on a scale sufficient so that service becomes a universal experience of American life and a universal expectation of American citizenship.

The cost of making the AmeriCorps-style experience available to every high school graduate overnight would — even in the Era of Big Surplus — put a strain on the federal budget. Moreover, the physical and psychic infrastructure for such a national commitment is simply not in place. But there is a way of capturing some of the benefits of national service right now while also beginning the process of changing our cultural expectations so that young people come to view it as their civic obligation to perform national service. America's leaders should make this commitment: ***Anyone who wants to earn college aid in exchange for service can do so.*** Financial aid for education would become an "earned entitlement" — one in which anyone was entitled to the extra financial assistance benefit so long as they contributed to the country first.

The plan outlined below would create one million service-for-aid opportunities by the year 2004. Here's how the plan would work:

1) Enlarge AmeriCorps

In February, President Clinton proposed increasing AmeriCorps funding so that by the year 2003 there would be 100,000 new members each year. This is an increase from 40,000 this year and 53,000 next year. Even 100,000 doesn't come close to the GI Bill, but look at it this way: It amounts to an equivalent of 230 people in each congressional district. And the effect is cumulative. Five years later, there would be 1,150 people in any given congressional district who had done service. Pretty soon it would be hard to go to a Rotary Club meeting without bumping into an AmeriCorps alumnus at the buffet table.

Each new increase in AmeriCorps should be focused on a specific need. Clinton did that in 1997, when he proposed an AmeriCorps increase dedicated to the America Reads program. The next 10,000 members could be geared toward creating after-school programs that have multiple benefits: keeping kids out of trouble, providing mentors, and giving

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"National service should not be just a special chance for a few — but a way of life."

Photograph by Scott Suchman

daycare for working parents. The 10,000 after that could help families with home care for the elderly. And the 10,000 after that could save the country's crumbling national and state park system.

Price tag: $362 million in new money for the extra 47,000 slots for a total of 100,000 service opportunities.

2) Tutor kids instead of scooping ice cream

High school students should be able to earn education money by doing some part-time service during the school year and full-time service during the summer, when they would also receive a stipend. If they finish the service they would also get a scholarship of $1,000. They would be getting more socially useful jobs and probably earning more money for college than they'd get otherwise. In addition, this model of service is less expensive for the government than the traditional AmeriCorps program because most teens live at home and, therefore, wouldn't need nearly as generous a living stipend. For the price of one AmeriCorps member, you could field six high school service cadets.

Price Tag: $900 million for 300,000 slots.

3) Change "Work-Study" to "Serve-Study"

One of the greatest outrages of recent years has been the hijacking of the college work-study program [See Sidebar by Thomas Ehrlich, p. 23]. Nearly a million young people are in the program earning college aid as they work in the cafeteria, library or dean's office. While the program was designed to have a strong service element, college presidents have turned it into their own pool of cheap labor. The next President should stand up to the college presidents and require that half of all work-study slots (500,000) be geared toward helping the community.

Price tag: $0 additional dollars for 500,000 new aid-in-exchange-for-service opportunities.

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Photograph by Scott Suchman

Work-Study:
Service for Communities, Not Colleges

by Thomas Ehrlich

When it adopted the federal work-study program as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress made its intentions clear. Along with helping college and university students pay for their schooling through part-time employment, the twin purpose of the program was to encourage students to participate in community service activities that would benefit local communities and engender in students a sense of social responsibility.

Yet, over the last three decades, the program has drifted away from that original purpose. While a few campuses, such as Case Western Reserve, dedicate more than half their work-study funds to community service, they are the rare exceptions. At most colleges and universities, work-study funds serve primarily to finance low-skilled jobs such as sorting mail or serving food that may very well assist campuses in meeting budgets, but are unrelated to societal needs or the personal goals of students. These jobs are far removed from work-study's supposed purpose of service to the community. It is long, long past time for Congress and the Administration to insist that the work-study program place equal emphasis on its second original intention.

This year about 930,000 students will receive more than $870 million in financial aid through the work-study program, an eight-fold increase from 1965. But the growth has come without much attention to the original Congressional aim of placing students in community service positions. A

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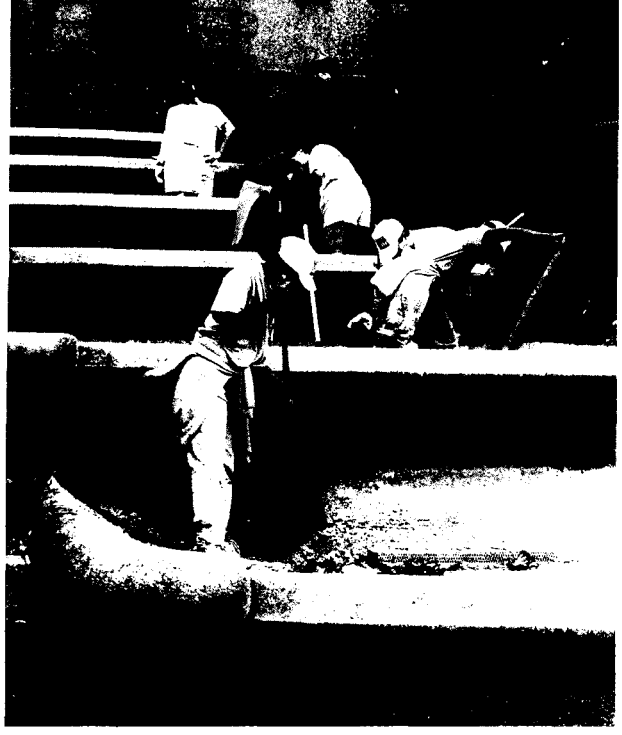

4) Create a New Domestic GI Bill

Under most AmeriCorps programs, the government provides the bulk of funds for a scholarship, a stipend for the member and some administrative money for the non-profit running the effort. To leverage the federal government's resources, we should also establish a corps of servers who receive a scholarship, but no government-funded stipend.

For instance, the Red Cross could create its own Disaster Corps made up of 21-year-olds who could swoop in anytime, anywhere, working full-time, helping to coordinate the stream of volunteers that come to assist. The government could give each youngster a $4,000 scholarship, and perhaps throw $1,000 to the Red Cross to sweeten the pot. Still, the non-profit would be putting up much of the money themselves.

The Corporation for National Service has tried to do a small version of this. Currently, there are about 15,000 of these "education award only" slots. But the programs are having trouble finding people to fill them. What is lacking is a commitment from the largest philanthropic, religious, and civic institutions to make this work. Imagine, for instance, if the Catholic Church said they would make it a goal that every parish would raise the money to sustain one person for a year of service. They could find the family (or convent) to provide room and board, and the government would provide the scholarship. Imagine similar commitments from other religions, as well as from

1991 General Accounting Office study made clear that only a tiny fraction of students receiving work-study funds were then engaged in community service. In response, Congress amended the Higher Education Act to require that at least 5 percent of work-study funds be used for students engaged in community service. That requirement will increase to 7 percent, beginning in fiscal year 2000.

Even with this improvement, only about one out of every fifteen work-study dollars will be required for community-service. This is simply not enough. *As a down payment on returning to the original congressional vision, at least one half of work-study funds should be earmarked for community service use.* This step will be in the direct interest of students, of their colleges and universities, and — most importantly — of communities everywhere.

Our democracy depends on active and engaged citizens working together for their communities. This is exactly what community service encourages. Students come to understand what problems the community faces, the richness of its diversity, the need for individual commitments of time and energy to enhance civic life, and most of all the importance of working as a community to resolve common concerns. Community service is a powerful antidote to the dangerous disengagement of college-age youth in the civic processes that are essential for our society.

Particularly when linked to academic study and structured reflection in what has come to be termed "service learning," community service can help students gain more insight into their academic courses as well as a better understanding of who their neighbors are and what they owe to each other.

Work-study funds can readily be linked to service learning courses. Students gain academic credit for their course

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groups like the Boys Clubs, Rotaries, and other civic organizations. It's not hard to see how several hundred thousand service slots could become available, while keeping the government's cost limited to the scholarship.

The mechanism to maintain quality and accountability is already in place. Groups could simply apply to the existing state commissions on national and community service to get their programs certified. The commissions would be charged with the responsibility of insuring that these slots are actually 'service' — helping other people as opposed to filing papers in the office or raising money for the new capital campaign.

Price tag: $500 million for 100,000 members.

At a cost to the government of about $1.7 billion, you have a plan that would pay for a 20 fold increase in service opportunities with a five-fold increase in spending. With one million Americans serving their country by the year 2004, it would set the United States of America on the path to reaching the day when we can say that national service should not be just a special chance for a few — but a way of life. This is an agenda that really could be embraced by any candidate, Democrat or Republican. They undoubtedly could come up with their own variations. (One other idea to consider: a national service program for senior citizens, who have more time and experience to do good than even high school students.)

The plan outlined above provides for a variety of service experiences, keeps it non-bureaucratic, locally-controlled, inexpensive, and allows national service to become an important force in American society. It would enable the next President to state: every young person in America who wants to earn extra college aid can do so — if they are willing to give something back to their country and community. Under this system, national service would finally be national — and the country could be transformed.✧

work and financial aid for their community service, while the academic and the community work both strengthen and reinforce each other. Colleges and universities will benefit because the use of work-study funds for community service can be a powerful means for recruiting community-spirited students. Most importantly, campuses will increasingly be seen as preparing good citizens and as good citizen partners.

At the same time, a 50 percent community service requirement will enormously benefit cities and towns that desperately need workers to help build their communities. Two recent programs begun by the Administration underscore how such help can be used. America Reads, which encourages work-study students to serve as reading tutors in elementary schools, has already attracted thousands of tutors. A similar effort, called America Counts, is expanding federal work-study to encourage mathematics tutoring.

In his 1996 commencement address at Penn State University, President Clinton made the case for such a change: "If it's good for students to earn money by putting books back in library shelves or working in the Dean's Office, surely it makes sense for them to earn money helping teen mothers handle their responsibilities, helping older people get around, helping young people to look to a brighter future." He was right. It is time now for Congress to reaffirm that community service is one of the twin purposes of the work-study program, and to require that at least half of each institution's work-study funds be used for that purpose.✧

Thomas Ehrlich is Distinguished University Scholar at California State University and Senior Scholar at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He is also President Emeritus of Indiana University and a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National Service.

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By Charles N. Quigley

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EDUCATION for DEMOCRACY

A PLAN TO REQUIRE CIVICS AND SERVICE TO BUILD TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

In today's new knowledge-based economy, schools have a greater burden than ever in preparing our children for a lifetime of work. But that alone is not enough. Our schools must also prepare our children for a lifetime of active citizenship.

From this nation's earliest days, leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Adams recognized that even the most well-designed institutions are not sufficient to maintain a free society. Ultimately, a vibrant democracy must rely on the knowledge, skill, and virtues of its citizens and their elected officials. Education that imparts that knowledge and skill and fosters those virtues is essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy and civic life.

The goal of education in civics and government is informed, responsible participation in political life by citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy.

Charles N. Quigley is Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education.

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A Need for Increased Attention

This important part of education is seldom given sustained attention in the K-12 curriculum. Inattention to civic education stems in part from the assumption that civic knowledge and skills emerge as by-products of other disciplines or as outcomes of the process of schooling itself. While it is true that history, economics, literature, and other subjects do enhance students' understanding of government and politics, they cannot replace a systematic civic education. It has been estimated that at most 15 percent of students at the pre-collegiate level receive an adequate education in this field.

The lack of required American government courses in 30 states is evidence of indifference to civic education throughout our schools. It is not surprising, therefore, that numerous studies reveal apathy, alienation, low levels of voting, and a paucity of knowledge about government among young people.

A new study of students just starting college found that "this year's college freshmen exhibit higher levels of disengagement — both academically and politically — than any previous entering class of students."

Perhaps now more than ever before, our children need to understand the ways of democratic life. The forces of technological, social, and demographic change have the potential to pull citizens farther apart unless greater attention is paid to the values that unite us as Americans and the ways we can act on those values to build stronger communities.

The failure of schools to provide effective civic education is particularly unfortunate because there is abundant evidence that good civic education programs make a real difference. Studies show that they can increase participation in civic life, promote tol-

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erance, enhance political expertise, and encourage a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. These findings provide the basis and justification for a new nationwide initiative to promote education for democracy in our schools.

To reform and revitalize civic education in our schools, every state should require high school seniors to take a capstone course in Democracy Education as a condition of graduation. This course in Democracy Education would:

- ensure that all students understand our government's workings as well as naturalized citizens do;
- serve as a rite of passage as they begin their adult lives; and
- inculcate them with the importance of community service.

The 21st century agenda also should promote the idea that education in civics and government should not be seen as incidental, but as a central purpose of education that is essential to the well-being of American democracy.

What is Democracy Education?

Unlike traditional civics classes, a Democracy Education course explores the responsibility for "owning" government and participating as an active citizen. It includes attention not only to facts and content, but also to the essential skills, principles, and values required for full participation in and reasoned commitment to our democratic system. The essential elements of Democracy Education are 1) civic knowledge, 2) civic skills, 3) civic dispositions and character development, and 4) community service.

"A Democracy Education course explores the responsibility for 'owning' government."

1) Civic Knowledge.

Civic knowledge is the content that should be taught — the basic facts that citizens ought to know for effective participation. In the voluntary *National Standards for Civics and Government* and the *Civics Framework for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, the knowledge component is embodied in five questions. These are questions that continue to engage political philosophers and politicians. They are questions that should engage every citizen:

I. What are civic life, politics, and government? Citizens should be equipped to deal with essential questions about the nature of civic life, politics, and government: Why are politics and government necessary? What are the purposes of government? What are the essential characteristics of and differences between limited and unlimited government? What are the nature and purposes of constitutions? What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments? What is the role of civil society?

II. What are the foundations of the American political system? Citizens should know the ideals, values, and principles set forth in the nation's core documents to provide the criteria to judge the means and ends of government, as well as the means and ends of the myriad groups that are part of civil society. This knowledge must include an understanding of the historical, philosophical, and economic foundations of the American political system; the distinctive

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characteristics of American society and political culture; and the values and principles basic to American constitutional democracy — such as individual rights and responsibilities, concern for the public good, the rule of law, justice, equality, diversity, truth, patriotism, federalism, and the separation of powers.

III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

Citizens should understand the limited government they have inherited and the complex dispersal and sharing of powers it entails. Citizens who understand the justification for this system and its design are better able to participate competently in public affairs, to hold their governments — local, state, and national — accountable, and to ensure that the rights of individuals are protected. They also should develop a considered appreciation of the unparalleled opportunities for choice and citizen participation that the system makes possible.

IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

To make judgments about the role of the United States in the world today and about what course American foreign policy should take, citizens need to understand the major elements of international relations and how world affairs affect their own lives and the security and well-being of their communities, state, and nation.

V. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

In a constitutional democracy, each citizen is a full and equal member of a self-governing community — endowed with rights and entrusted with responsibilities. Citizens should understand that, through their involvement in political life and in civil society, they may help to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, communities, and nation. If they want their voices to be heard, they must participate in the political process. Although elections, campaigns, and voting are central to democratic institutions,

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citizens should learn that beyond electoral politics many participatory opportunities are open to them. Finally, they should understand that attaining individual and public goals goes hand-in-hand with participation in political life and civil society. They are more likely to achieve personal goals for themselves and their families — as well as their goals for their communities, state, and nation — if they are informed, effective, and responsible citizens.

2) Civic Skills: Intellectual and Participatory.

Intellectual skills in civics and government are inseparable from content. To think critically about a political issue, one must understand the issue, its history, its context, and its contemporary relevance.

But a "just the facts, ma'am," civic curriculum is not enough. Democracy Education must also focus on the skills required to participate competently and responsibly in politics and civic life. Those participatory skills include those needed to communicate and to work cooperatively with others, to track current events and issues in the political process and government, and to affect the processes and outcomes of politics and governance.

3) Civic Dispositions: Essential Traits of Private and Public Character.

Civic dispositions are those traits of private and public character that contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and the improvement of society. These include responsible self-governance by each individual, moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for individual worth and human dignity.

In addition, our democracy cannot function as it should unless its citizens are inclined to participate thoughtfully in public affairs. Traits of public character such as public spiritedness, civility, respect for law, critical mindedness, and a willingness to negotiate and compromise are indispensable for its vitality.

These traits of private and public character contribute to the political abilities of the individual, the healthy functioning of the political system, and the individual's sense of dignity and worth.

4) Community Service.

Community service must be an important part of Democracy Education — provided it is conceived as being more than just doing good deeds. Community service should be integrated into both the formal and informal curriculum of the school. Community service is not a substitute for formal instruction in civics and government, but it can enhance that instruction. Students must understand that one of their responsibilities as citizens in American democracy is to be a part of making sure their community is strong. Schools must do more than require service and make students aware of opportunities to serve their schools and communities. Students must be adequately prepared for such experiential learning. They need to understand the institution or agency with which they'll be engaged and its larger social and political context. Students need to be supervised and provided with regular opportunities to reflect on their experiences.

Conclusion

Humans may well be born free, but that doesn't mean they are born with the capacity to participate competently and responsibly in a civic society. Part of a basic education in the 21st century must be the fostering of a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. Thus prepared, citizens should have the capacity and the inclination to work together to preserve our democratic heritage and narrow the gap between our ideals and reality. The establishment of Democracy Education as a graduation requirement for 12th-grade students is an important step toward achieving this goal.✧

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Re-Funding Social Services

WHY GOVERNMENT SHOULDN'T FEAR WORKING WITH CHURCHES.

By David Kuo

The most extraordinary thing about 1996's historic welfare reform bill wasn't simply that an overwhelming number of Senators and Congressmen in both parties voted to reform an outdated, anti-work system. The amazing thing was that they reached consensus on a radically new approach to caring for people in need. Rejecting a one-size-fits-all approach to welfare, they recognized the limits of the federal government's reach, embraced state government reform, and perhaps most significantly took tentative steps towards establishing a public/private partnership to strengthen a panoply of charities, civic groups, churches, and synagogues.

Nearly three years into the experiment, the 1996 reform has been an unqualified success — cutting welfare caseloads in half or more and giving millions of people a new shot at full-time employment and economic independence.

David Kuo is co-founder of The American Compass, an organization that evaluates and funds the most effective social service organizations serving people in need.

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At the same time, however, the 1996 reform is discovering the limits to its prodigious early success — millions of hard-core members of the underclass who have not responded to the incentives to work and the disincentives to pursue government assistance and who are genuinely suffering. For some, these limits of reform are ample reason to re-entitle and create a new version of the old welfare state. For others they are an excuse to crack down even harder on those people who haven't yet "gotten off the dole." In reality, however, this is an incredible opportunity for Washington to take the lead in following-up on the public/private efforts that were hinted at in 1996.

For those still struggling on welfare, neither existing government nor private programs are individually capable of addressing their long-term dependency and lack of life- or job-skills. Something more is clearly needed. Many are increasingly persuaded that "something more" means the radical, dramatic intervention of community-based programs, churches, and civic groups: the personal touch of people committed to helping turn around a life. This isn't a vague and irregular voluntarism by suburban soccer moms, but a genuine mobilization and strengthening of indigenous community institutions that are a true hope for meeting the life, educational, physical, and job needs of men and women for whom employment and advancement are words, not realities.

These are programs, people, and places with roots deep into communities that are suffering. Ones like Deliverance Evangelistic Temple built on the site of old Connie Mack Stadium in downtown Philadelphia. There, Pastor Ben Smith runs scores of programs that provide everything from child care to drug and alcohol rehabilitation to new mothers classes to Bible studies. They are capable of delivering services in a way no government program possibly could — and their anecdotal results are tremendous. Yet these programs and organizations are dramatically underfunded and

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undermanned. Programs that *are* working suffer from a dearth of the funds they need to expand their operations and serve more people. Despite calls for greater private sector philanthropy, only a fraction of every charitable dollar ends up with social service organizations serving people in need and a smaller fraction of those dollars with inner-city organizations.

This challenge represents a unique opportunity to change the way that government assists the poor and needy. For generations, Washington has operated by the principle that providing for the common good means running the programs that ensure the common good. This highly centralized and nationalized approach created a welfare system in which bureaucrats tried to fashion a utopian system that ended up helping very few.

In a world of downsizing, niche marketing, and core competencies, perhaps Washington can change its approach to social policy as well — focusing on those things that it does well. There can be few doubts that Washington raises money, distributes money, and monitors that money better than most any other institution. It should continue to do those things and thereby increase the capability of society's community institutions to do what they do best.

There are a number of ways to get money to these groups. Some proposals like the Project for American Renewal and the Community Renewal Act have called for changes in the tax code to make giving — especially giving to the poor — easier and more incentivized. These tax credits have the benefit of being minimally intrusive on organizations that fear government money might corrupt them.

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On the down side, however, there is little evidence to suggest that these changes would benefit the kinds of inner-city organizations that are now in most dire need of finances. If current philanthropic trends were to continue — albeit in greater amounts — suburban soccer fields, suburban hospitals, and suburban universities would benefit far more than inner-city community programs.

Another possibility that provides for both government involvement and individual autonomy for people and groups is the voucher concept. On the upside, vouchers have proven themselves successful in child care and in a few isolated examples of school voucher programs. In addition, vouchers mean easily accessible money for the organizations that receive them. At the same time, however, vouchers raise fears about a lack of accountability and an inability to ensure that dollars are being used for their intended purposes.

"A return to 20th century notions of big government is unlikely."

Finally — most controversially and perhaps most hopefully — there is the idea of direct government assistance to private and religious community-based organizations: a vastly larger public/private partnership in which government would disperse funds to organizations, monitoring both programs and finances.

A "Social Capital Fund" would provide federal matching funds directly to organizations and ministries that meet basic administrative, legal, managerial, and financial standards supplementing the private sector funds that they are already raising. The Social Capital Grants would bypass both state and city government enabling indigenous groups to apply for the funds they need to expand and replicate. Rather than being lump-sum payments, however, they would match existing donations that the groups receive encouraging both greater incentive for organizational fund raising and greater community and philanthropic involvement in these charitable organizations. In short, the Social Capital Grants would leverage social dollars that the government already spends and facilitate greater community involvement in caring for indigenous problems.

These grants would be contingent upon long-term monitoring of the organizations' success. Rather than selecting organizations based upon an operational methodology, the Social Capital Grants would be extended only to those groups that prove bottom-line efficacy over time. Under this plan, all groups would be given broad freedoms in their operations so long as they achieve their goals. With strict prohibitions in place against discrimination, mass evangelism, and the like, this approach rewards success and permits large numbers of groups to participate — leveraging the social dollars government already spends.

To draw a business analogy, more than 20 years ago, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak were creating what would become Apple Computers in a garage in Cupertino, California. Their entrepreneurial genius attracted the venture capital they needed to make their vision real. Today, social entrepreneurs need the same kind of capital and encouragement to expand their innovative work. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, that capital is scarce. Government has a chance to help fill the gap and fund not the staid but the potentially stellar.

The potential objections to such an approach are manifold. Bypassing state and city governments certainly offends federalists. The problem, however, is that states and cities all have their pet projects, their own bureaucracies, and their set ways of doing things. This approach is different because standard means of

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Photograph by Scott Suchman

operation are clearly not working. The idea of government picking and choosing which charities get money is controversial as well. If, however, we are to determine what works and what doesn't work quantitatively and qualitatively some form of selection among well-intentioned charities is fundamental. Funding groups that have a faith element is likewise controversial. As the recently enacted "Charitable Choice" provision of the welfare law has demonstrated, however, it is possible to maintain both a strict separation of church and state and still enable religious organizations to compete on a level playing field with secular organizations when it comes to providing social sector service.

This approach is ultimately good for both government and the private sector. It is clear that a return to 20th century notions of big government is unlikely. Just as clearly, most people see a need for government's involvement in ensuring the common good. At the same time, community organizations are in dire need of financing for almost everything that they do. Flooded basements, burned out lights, broken windows, inadequate facilities, radically underpaid staff, broken playgrounds, and the like are more common than not. Despite the heroic efforts of many who are trying to assist them, money is tight. Direct government assistance to these groups would change that in a heartbeat. It would also lend a level of legitimacy that might encourage the influx of funds from other sources — corporations, foundations, and philanthropies.

There are many questions that remain about the details of this new kind of government assistance — one that focuses on outcomes rather than the mechanisms for achieving a specified end. But those questions pale in comparison to the need that exists for a new kind of government assistance that could bolster the efforts of private and religious community institutions that are far better suited than government to address the social needs that exist. Whether this idea could wind its way through the political maze that exists is a separate question — but one that could end up benefiting all involved.✧

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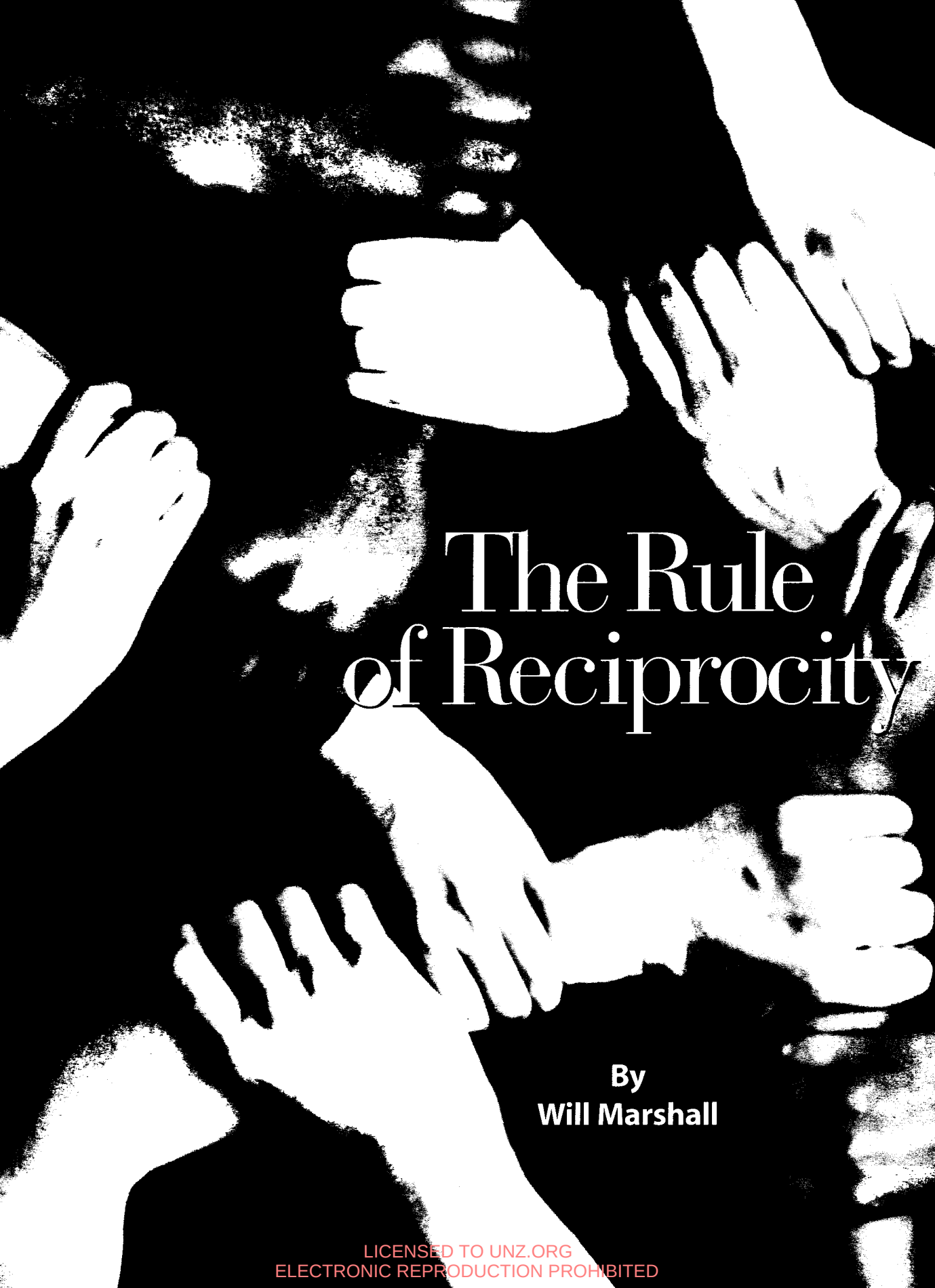

The Rule of Reciprocity

By
Will Marshall

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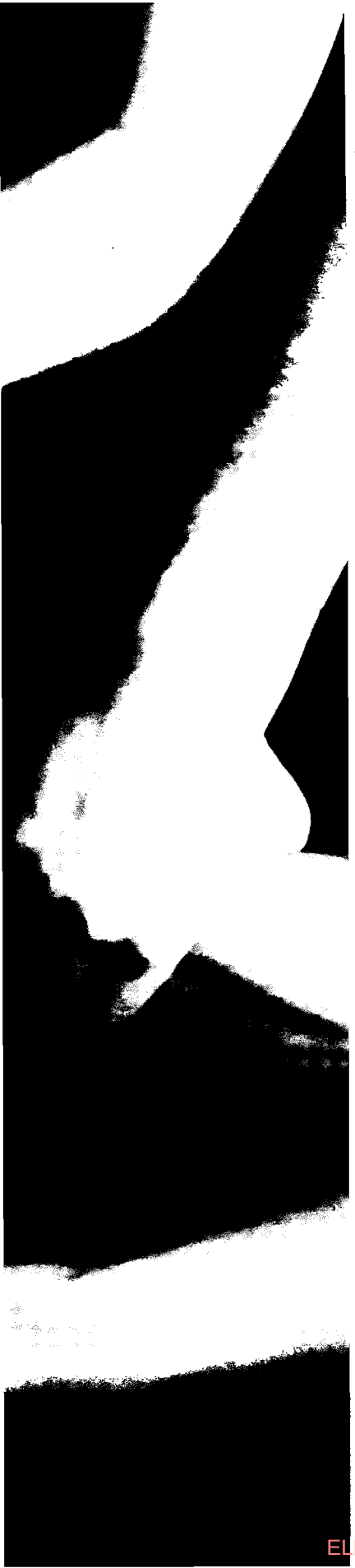

We applied the rule to welfare. Now we should extend it to programs affecting everyone. Now *that* will subvert politics-as-usual in Washington.

When President Clinton signed legislation in 1996 ending "welfare as we know it," he did more than abolish a federal program everyone loves to hate. By replacing the legal entitlement to welfare with a reciprocal compact linking public assistance to work, he also put Washington's efforts to aid the poor on a sturdier moral foundation. Now it's time to extend the principle of reciprocity to America's most urgent challenge: entitlement reform.

Striking a new balance between citizens' rights and their responsibilities is integral to the emerging politics of the Third Way. Such a politics challenges the radical individualism that underpins both the left's embrace of one-way rights and entitlements and the right's abandonment of social responsibility. It sees citizens not merely as passive consumers of goods and services, whether from government or the market, but as active builders of our democratic commonwealth. The ethical core of the Third Way is civic reciprocity: Whenever possible, policies should be devised so that citizens who contribute to the community are rewarded, and those who benefit from the community give something back.

Will Marshall is President of the Progressive Policy Institute.

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This "rule of reciprocity" is no abstract concept — with welfare reform, it is already transforming the lives of millions. Where the old welfare system assumed that being poor automatically entitled people to cash support with few strings attached, the new ethic of civic reciprocity asks everyone to put something back in the common pot.

In a sharp break with liberal orthodoxy, Clinton and his New Democrat allies insisted on treating welfare recipients not as permanent wards of the state but as citizens with the same rights and obligations as everyone else. Yet rather than simply shove people off the dole — the GOP's basic recipe for reform — they pressed for replacing the cash entitlement with an employment system that not only requires work but also enables people to work.

This "work first" philosophy is working. Welfare rolls have fallen by about a third since 1996 and by a whopping 42 percent since the national caseload peaked in 1994. Meanwhile, the social cataclysm predicted so confidently by veteran poverty warriors has failed to materialize. While the transition to work has been difficult for many, unemployment is at a 25-year low, poverty rates have declined, serious crime has plummeted, and teen pregnancy and child poverty rates, though still too high, are finally trending downward.

Of course, a turbo-charged economy and tight labor markets have played a major role as well. But only the most blinkered ideologue would deny that dismantling the old system — as opposed to the ineffectual tinkering that characterized Congress' previous stabs at welfare reform — has profoundly altered the relationship between government and citizens who need its help. By linking public benefits to the bedrock value of work, reform has begun to erase the stigma attached to public assistance and has realigned social policy with the public's moral sentiments. Indeed, White House pollster Mark Penn has found evidence

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of a striking turnaround: Americans are now not only willing to spend more to help welfare recipients get jobs, but consider doing so a top national priority.

Skeptics are correct when they say that the shift from welfare to work has yet to face its sternest tests: Finding jobs for hard-core welfare recipients and keeping the rolls from swelling back up when the next economic downturn arrives. Nonetheless, the early returns suggest that public policies conceived in the spirit of reciprocity are far more likely to work and enjoy sustained popular support.

That's why there's no reason to confine the "rule of reciprocity" to programs affecting the poor and vulnerable. Simple fairness requires that we also apply the rule of reciprocity to the big middle class entitlements — Social Security and Medicare — whose looming bankruptcy is the next great challenge confronting Washington policymakers. More than bookkeeping is at stake: The enormous unfunded liabilities both programs face also threaten to unravel the reciprocal bargain on which their popularity and legitimacy rests.

Social Security and Medicare are based on an intergenerational compact: We work and pay taxes to support our parents' retirement and health care; in turn, we expect our children to do the same for us. Up until now, the deal has worked well, but it can no longer be sustained as the number of older Americans explodes and the workforce that supports them fails to grow apace. A generation of relatively slower growth and politically popular benefit expansions have compounded the problem. As a result, the program is out of whack to the tune of over $3 trillion over the next 75 years. Simply put, the baby boomers haven't figured out how to pay for their impending retirement in a way that ensures that their children will not inherit crushing payroll tax burdens, dwindling benefits, or both.

The old "pay-as-you-go" compact is breaking down even faster for Medicare, which will go bankrupt in less than a decade without major reforms. It falls to the baby boom generation, whose massive numbers have brought matters to a head, to update that compact. We need to find a way to finance health and retirement security for everyone that strikes a fair balance between what we produce (the taxes we are willing to pay) and what we consume (the benefits we collect) as well as between the needs of the present and our responsibility to pass on fair and financially sound systems to our children.

President Clinton, the first boomer to occupy the White House, has proposed dedicating a large chunk of future budget surpluses to both programs. Even if Congress approves the idea, however, that would only close about half of the gap that Social Security officials project between future commitments and revenues. Moreover, the President's plan envisions channeling general revenues into the Social Security and Medicare trust funds for the first time. This would further attenuate the link between payroll taxes and benefits, making both programs more like direct transfer schemes. If we are to preserve Social Security and Medicare as contributory, "social insurance" programs, serious structural reform is unavoidable, and the longer we delay the more costly the fix. Yet there seems to be little appetite in Washington for any change that would demand much sacrifice from any voter, whether it's reducing future benefits, raising payroll taxes, or trimming inflation adjustments.

There is another sense in which the unsustainable growth of the big entitlements violates the rule of reciprocity. If we allow Social Security and Medicare to eat up an ever-growing share of our national budget, we will have very little left over for progressive investments in education, health care, the environment and so on. Today roughly half the federal budget goes to retirement and health programs; without reform that figure will rise to 80-90 percent after the boomers retire. The Congressional Budget Office reports that Washington spends seven times as much, per capita, on the elderly as on young people, even though the latter are almost twice as likely to live in poverty. To oppose serious entitlement reform is a tacit endorsement of a policy that is already badly askew when it comes

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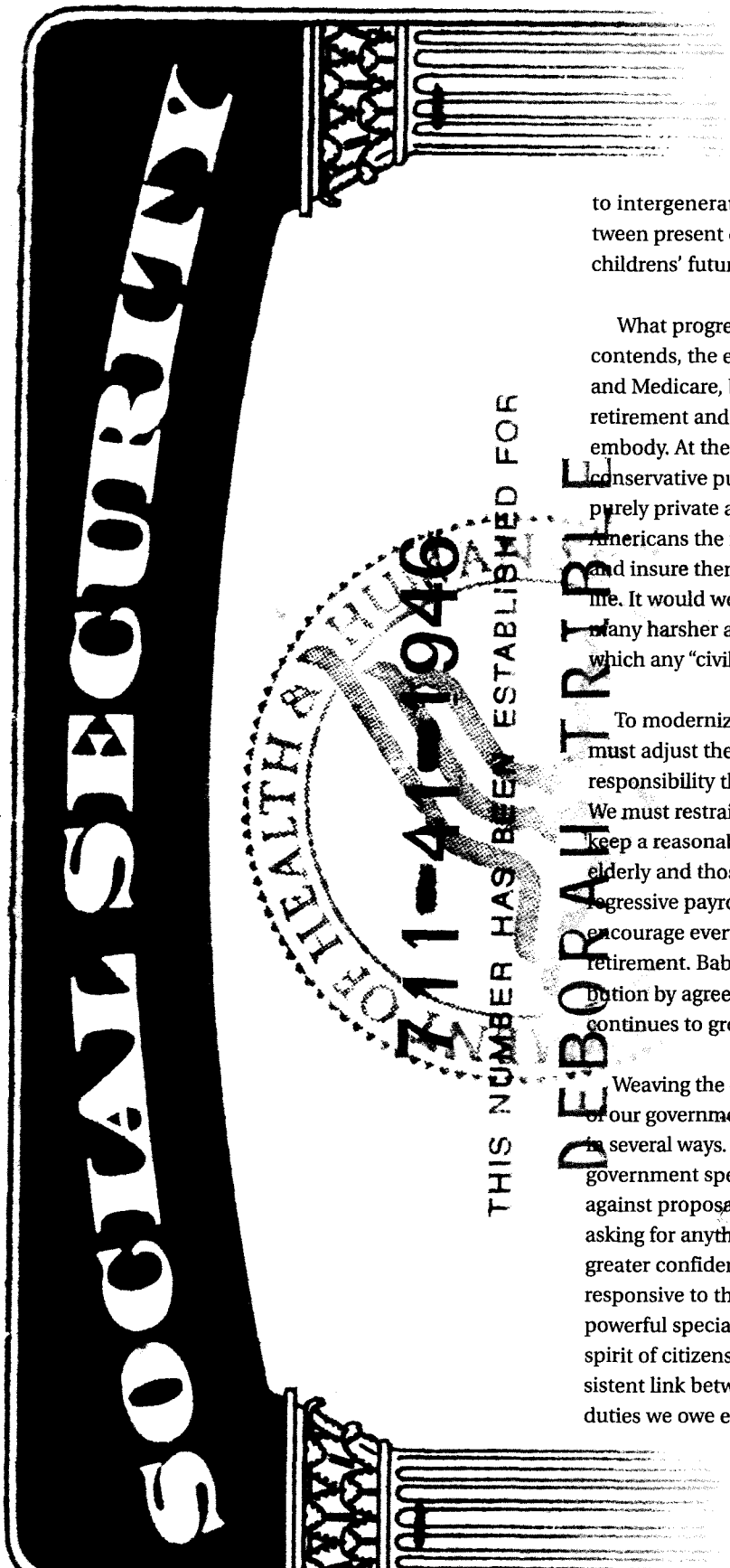

to intergenerational equity and the trade off between present consumption and investment in our childrens' future.

What progressives should defend is not, as the left contends, the existing structure of Social Security and Medicare, but the commitment to universal retirement and health security that those programs embody. At the same time, we should oppose the conservative push to replace the two programs with purely private alternatives. This course would deny Americans the right to voluntarily agree to pool risks and insure themselves against certain vicissitudes of life. It would worsen social inequality, make life for many harsher and shrivel the spirit of mutuality on which any "civil society" worthy of the name depends.

To modernize Social Security and Medicare, we must adjust the balance of individual and social responsibility that underlies these popular programs. We must restrain entitlement spending growth to keep a reasonable balance between the needs of the elderly and those of everyone else. We must keep the regressive payroll tax down, trim future benefits and encourage everyone to save more for their own retirement. Baby boomers can make a major contribution by agreeing to work longer, as life expectancy continues to grow.

Weaving the ethic of civic reciprocity into the fabric of our government would strengthen our democracy in several ways. It would impose a new discipline on government spending by creating a presumption against proposals that dispense benefits without asking for anything in return. It would give Americans greater confidence that their government is more responsive to their common concerns, rather than to powerful special interests. And it would buttress the spirit of citizenship by insisting on a clear and consistent link between the rights we enjoy and the duties we owe each other and our country.✧

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Public Opinion

Americans have achieved a high degree of consensus when it comes to the importance of community. Yet, they are concerned by a civic life that is weakening and a society that focuses more on rights than on responsibilities.

By wide margins, voters hunger for:

- an end to the entitlement mentality;
- a reawakening of the ethics of reciprocity and mutual obligation;
- a government that works with religious and charitable organizations to tackle social ills and foster civic values.

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The Community Consensus

By Mark Penn

Washington may be imprisoned by continual cycles of partisan recrimination and the media may portray an America that is hopelessly divided on the basic questions facing our democracy. But outside of the Beltway and away from the cameras' glare, a remarkable consensus has developed in the nation on the importance of civic life, on the responsibility of citizens to contribute to the community, on the need for government action to take new forms, and on the demand that opportunities must come with obligations.

The results of a new survey of 509 adults conducted between February 12-14, 1999, should serve to buttress the resolve of America's leaders to support programs to enhance civic involvement, to find ways for the government and community groups to work together on common goals, and to integrate the concepts of responsibility and citizenship into the public dialogue.

The highlights of this survey include:

1. **Americans believe that a strong sense of community is important to the nation — and they are *convinced that with citizenship come core obligations.***

2. **Americans are concerned by the decline they see in civic life and by a nation they see as valuing rights more than responsibilities.**

3. **Americans strongly believe in the notion of reciprocity and question the concept of entitlement.**

4. **While government should take a back seat to individuals and communities in strengthening civic life, targeted government initiatives aimed at creating more active and involved citizens can and should play a role.**

5. **Americans are closely split on the impact of technology on our civic life.**

6. **GenXers — an increasingly large part of the electorate — hunger for a revitalized spirit of community.**

Mark J. Penn is President of Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc. and the pollster to President Clinton.
Research and polling assistance provided by Jenifer Coleman and Jeffrey Epstein.

Full results of this poll can be found at www.dlc.org/blueprint/spring99/poll.html

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1. The Importance of Community

Americans are firm in their belief that "community" is more than a woolly concept — it is an obligation to be engaged in the life of the nation. Fully 96 percent of respondents say they think they have responsibilities to the country as American citizens. This nearly unanimous acceptance of obligation is the foundation for the strong consensus found on many related issues — including the importance of involvement in the community and the positive effect this can have on society as a whole.

- Americans have an obligation to be involved in their community by taking responsibility. A resounding 90 percent say Americans have an obligation to solve their problems by taking responsibility for themselves and for others, whereas merely 8 percent say Americans have no obligation to be involved in their community.
- Such involvement has intrinsic value to many aspects of society. Eighty-four percent say that a strong civic life[1] has a strong impact in producing better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government, while 13 percent say that a strong civic life has little or no impact on schools, crime, and effective government.
- When given the choice between government and civic life, they choose the latter. Eighty-two percent say it is better to have smaller government and a stronger civic life, while 11 percent say it is better to have a bigger government

The consensus extends not just to the vague concept of responsibility, but to the particular obligations that make up Americans' vision of citizenship. In fact, this consensus has strengthened in the course of the past 15 years.

Table 1

Do you feel the following is a very important obligation, a somewhat important obligation, or not an obligation that a citizen owes to the country?

Very Important	1999	1983-87 GSS[2]	Change
Reporting a crime you may have witnessed	90	89	-1
Attending parent-teacher conferences	89	NA	NA
Voting in elections	87	78	9
Being able to speak and understand English	85	82	3
Serving in the military if drafted	76	NA	NA
Keeping fully informed about news and public issues	73	55	18
Serving on a jury if called	73	64	9

[Table 1 Continued Next Page]

1. *Civic Life is defined as "the institutions that exist outside of the government and the business world, such as voluntary or civic associations, neighborhood watch groups, churches, and charity groups, and their affect on the relationship of citizens to their government, their communities, and each other."*
2. *General Social Survey data.*

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Table 1 (Continued)

Do you feel the following is a very important obligation, a somewhat important obligation, or not an obligation that a citizen owes to the country?

Very Important	1999	1983-87 GSS	Change
Contributing to help the less fortunate	71	NA	NA
Protesting unjust public policies	61	NA	NA
Participating in "Town Hall" community decision making meetings	59	NA	NA
Participating in neighborhood organizations (fraternal/school/church-based etc.)	56	NA	NA
Volunteering some time to community service	55	31	24
Volunteering for the military	48	NA	NA

While it is clear that Americans are paying increasing attention to what they owe their nation, they see their fellow citizens as coming up short — and they are demanding change.

Nearly nine out of ten believe that they are currently meeting their responsibilities as citizens. This perception of fulfillment of their own citizenship, however, is in stark contrast to their perceptions of American citizens in general. In fact, over half think that most Americans are not living up to their responsibilities as citizens.

Table 2

Do you think most Americans live up to their responsibilities as citizens or not?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Yes	40	45	35	37
No	54	49	60	54

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2. The Decline of Civic Life

Americans are pessimistic not only about other people fulfilling the responsibilities of citizenship, but also about the societal attitudes behind citizenship. Sixty-two percent think that most Americans have an attitude of cynicism and apathy, as opposed to an attitude of citizenship and participation.

Table 3

Do you think Americans today have an attitude of cynicism and apathy or of citizenship and participation?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Cynicism and Apathy	62	54	73	64
Citizenship and Participation	27	38	20	21

The lack of responsibility Americans perceive in their neighbors helps lead them to the conclusion that our civic life is in decline. This belief is closely related to Americans' views on obligation. Among the majority who believe most Americans *do not* fulfill their obligations as citizens, 65 percent believe that civic life has weakened, while among those who indicated Americans do fulfill their obligations, only half think civic life has weakened.

While Americans across the board believe that civic life has weakened in recent years, perceptions about our civic life are divided by an income gap. This suggests that Americans do tie their perceptions of civic life to their financial well-being — and that perhaps wealthier Americans are more isolated from the real problems that face the nation.

Table 4

Some people say that America's civic life has weakened in recent years, while others say that it remained strong. Which is closer to your view?

	All	Under $50K	Over $50K	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Our nation's civic life has weakened	57	61	52	50	68	58
Our nation's civic life has remained strong	36	32	43	43	29	34

Americans blame the decline in civic life on a number of factors, but an overwhelming 78 percent agree that the weakening of the family is a major factor—voters of all parties rate it as the largest factor. Following the weakening of the family is a lack of trust between people (67 percent say it is a major factor). Additionally, those who feel that civic life is weakening attribute it more than most to factors of families weakening, lack of trust, and crime.

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Table 5

Please tell me if you think this is a major factor, minor factor, or not a factor at all in the decline of Civic Life.

Ranked by All	Major Factor				
	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.	Civic Life Weak
Our families are weaker than they used to be	78	73	86	77	89
There is a general lack of trust between people	67	65	66	68	76
Our children are not educated about participation	63	63	73	55	69
People don't have time anymore	62	69	54	59	64
Our political leaders are corrupt	57	52	54	58	61
Government has gotten too big	54	36	68	60	57
Crime has made people scared to participate	53	62	47	49	63

A strong majority of Americans believe that there is currently more emphasis on the individual than on community — and they do not see this as a positive trend.

There is a correlation between beliefs about our focus on individuals vs. community and our perceptions of civic life. Two-thirds of those who believe civic life is weakening say there is more focus on the individual, while only 49 percent of those who say civic life remains strong see more focus on the individual.

Table 6

Do you think our society today focuses more on the individual or more on community?

	All	Civic Life Weakening	Civic Life Strong
Individual	59	65	49
Community	34	29	42

With the belief that we place a greater emphasis on the individual comes an explicit call for a change in that hierarchy. Three in four believe "getting more people involved in communal organizations, such as religious, fraternal, or educational organizations, is good for society as a whole."

In addition, a large majority of respondents agree that a greater emphasis must be placed on the community, even if it puts more demands on individuals.

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Table 7

Do you think there should be more emphasis on community, even if it puts more demands on individuals?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Yes	79	83	77	79
No	15	10	18	15

Along with a belief that individual citizens must work to improve the community, comes the expectation that corporations have a duty to use their power to do the same.

Table 8

Do you believe corporations have a responsibility to help improve the community, or is their only responsibility to make sure the company is economically successful?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Have a responsibility	84	87	77	86
Only economically successful	13	10	17	11

There is a strong feeling among the American public that something very basic has become off kilter — that we have lost America's historic balance between rights and responsibilities.

Table 9

Do you think people are focused too much on their rights instead of their responsibilities as citizens, or do you think there is a proper balance?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Focused too much on their rights	71	61	81	74
Proper balance	26	37	16	21

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Accumulating Social Capital

In his seminal article, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Robert Putnam argued that the weakening of civic engagement and civic life was in part due to a decline in Social Capital — the "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."[3] This poll shows that Americans agree in large part with Putnam's assertion; 74 percent believe that getting more involved in communal organizations, such as religious, fraternal, or educational organizations, is good for society as a whole.

Putnam cited data from the General Social Survey in reaching his conclusions, showing that membership in voluntary associations and organizations had declined. This poll found that the trend of declining membership in voluntary associations is — with the exception of Church-Affiliated Groups, which increased modestly — continuing.

Table 10

Have you ever done any active work for the following organizations. I mean, been a leader, helped organize a meeting, been an officer, or given time or money?

Ranked by 1999	1999	1983-87 GSS[4]	Change
Church Affiliated Groups	74	71	3
School Service Groups	64	64	0
Youth Groups	69	71	-2
Sports Groups	47	56	-9
Veterans Groups	32	42	-10
Professional/Academic Societies	44	58	-14
Labor Union	19	39	-20

3. A Call for Reciprocal Responsibility — and the End of Entitlement

Americans have more than a mere critique of our civic life — they have some very strongly held views as to how we should turn things around. Most Americans believe that government should discard the nostrum of entitlement and replace it with an ethic of reciprocity.

Americans have a strong desire to restore the balance between opportunities and obligations. This desire begins with a fundamental reevaluation of what government does. Americans universally believe that one must give in order to receive when it comes to government benefits. In a direct repudiation to those discordant voices

3. *"Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." Putnam, Robert D. Journal of Democracy 6:1, Jan. 1995, 65-78.*
4. *General Social Survey Data and Information Retrieval System, 1996. Survey conducted by in-person interviewers; 7,542 interviews conducted 1983-1987.*

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that say all Americans need to do in order to receive government benefits is pay their taxes, nine in ten respondents believe that one must live up to certain obligations in order to receive government benefits.

Table 11

Some people say that along with the benefits all Americans receive, such as public education, police protection, a democratic government, and a social safety net, it is the responsibility of citizens to also give back to society through participation in the community. Do you agree or disagree?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Agree	91	95	87	92
Disagree	7	5	9	5

Though the numbers drop, a very high number of Americans hold on to their belief that government benefits come with strings attached even when the question posed is not one of universal services, but specific aid given to those in need.

Table 12

Do you believe all Americans who need them are entitled to government benefits, or do you think these Americans need to live up to certain obligations and give something back to their country in order to receive them?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Entitled to government benefits	28	34	25	23
Need to live up to certain obligations	67	61	72	69

Even when *specific* benefits are named — benefits not just enjoyed by the very poor but by broad swaths of the middle class — a significant majority of Americans still hold tight to their belief that with public benefits come standards that must be met and an obligation to give something back.

Table 13

What about specific benefits such as student loans or housing assistance: do you think Americans who need them are entitled to these, or do Americans need to live up to certain obligations and give something back to their country in order to receive them?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Entitled to government benefits	37	50	33	26
Need to live up to certain obligations	58	45	63	67

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The Politics of Responsibility vs. Entitlement — A Caveat

On most issues important to the public that have been covered in previous ***Blueprint*** *polls — including education, Social Security, and health care — Independent voters are more apt to agree with the Democrats. When it comes to questions of responsibility and entitlement, Independents side with the GOP.*

The views of Independents are closer to Republicans than Democrats on the subject of balancing rights and responsibilities. Even more disturbing for Democrats who do not want to lose swing voters on this issue is that only one in four Independents believe Americans are entitled to benefits regardless of living up to obligations — in contrast with half of Democrats.

4. A New Role for Government in Restoring Civic Life

Just as the public is looking to government to ask more from Americans in exchange for the benefits they receive, they are also looking to government to make some significant changes itself.

Americans start from a belief that neither government nor business is the arena in which America will meet its challenges. Sixty-eight percent think that individuals within their communities must take responsibility for themselves and those around them.

Table 14

Which is closest to your view on the best way to solve America's problems?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
The government must come up with solutions	21	31	11	17
Individuals within their communities must take responsibility for themselves	68	58	82	71
The free market will solve societal problems	3	2	2	5

Although most Americans do not think that government should take the lead in fostering solutions, many believe that the government should play a role in working with communities to foster an environment that will encourage the growth of strong citizenship and restore our civic life. In fact — in the face of two alternatives which are widely peddled by popular pundits, and supposed fears of church and state contaminating one another — a staggering 72 percent of Americans call for closer collaboration between government and religious/charitable organizations to address the nation's problems.

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Table 15

Do you think America's social problems can be best addressed by government, religious and charitable organizations, or by closer collaboration between the two?

	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Government	8	11	9	5
Religious and Charitable	16	9	26	16
Closer collaboration between the two	72	77	60	75

Americans also overwhelmingly support a variety of specific government actions to inspire civic participation and community involvement. Nine in ten support mandatory Democracy Education as a condition of high school graduation and 84 percent support placing government funded work-study students out doing community service.

While Independents lean towards the Republican side on the gravity and salience of the civic challenge, they tend to lean more towards the Democratic side on these specific solutions — in fact, giving more support than Democrats on expanding AmeriCorps and creating local service credit programs.

Table 16

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this as a way of improving Civic Life?

		Total Support			
	Strongly	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Requiring Democracy Education in service and civics as a graduation requirement for all high school students	68	90	92	82	92
Expanding AmeriCorps so that every young person that wants to can participate	55	82	84	73	88
Placing college students who receive government funded work study jobs out doing community service rather than in on-campus jobs	47	84	90	69	90
Creating local service credit programs, under which for one hour of service performed, you could get an hour of service from someone else when you needed it in your life	42	76	77	66	79

[Table 16 Continued Next Page]

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Table 16 (Continued)

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this as a way of improving Civic Life?

	Total Support				
	Strongly	All	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Decreasing government reliance on social service programs and enabling church and faith-based organizations to play a larger role in addressing social problems	39	78	77	84	71
A universal system of national citizen service where young adults would be called on to serve their country either through military or community service	38	74	87	69	66
Steering government dollars towards community and religious organizations that are dealing with social problems	37	74	75	72	77

5. Can the 'Net build Civic Networks?

Americans are conflicted on the impact of technology on individuals and communities, with no clear majority on either side of the question. Forty-nine percent think new technologies have brought people closer together, while 43 percent say they have made people more isolated.

However, of those who believe our civic life has weakened, 52 percent believe new technologies have made us more isolated, compared to 42 percent overall.

Looking down the road, people are only slightly more optimistic about the future. Fifty-three percent say that new technologies will bring people closer together, 40 percent say more isolated.

Yet those who use the Internet today are more optimistic than the rest of the population on the impact of technology on American society.

Table 17

Some people say that new technologies have made Americans more isolated and drawn them farther apart, while others say that they have opened up new lines of communication and brought people closer together. Which is closer to your view?

	All	Internet Users	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
More Isolated	43	35	45	44	39
Closer Together	49	58	51	47	48

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While Americans may be split on their view of the impact which the abstract concept technology has had on community, they see a positive impact when asked about some specific new technologies.

Table 18

Do you feel that this technology has made society more individualistic, or brought people closer together?

Individualistic/Closer Together	All	Internet Users	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
E-mail	29/58	26/71	30/56	33/51	26/62
Internet	37/47	35/59	37/45	44/37	33/53
Cellular Phones	36/51	34/59	39/51	34/53	34/48

While there is some disagreement over the effects technology has had on American society, 8 in 10 believe that technology can be used to encourage participation in society. Thus far, however, only 60 percent of Internet users and 37 percent overall utilize the Internet for any civic participation. This indicates that while the Internet has become an effective tool for encouraging civic participation, it still has a long way to go.

Table 19

Following are some things people use the Internet for. Do you use the Internet for this purpose?

	All	Internet Users	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Get information about politics and government	37	60	25	53	39
Getting information about community events	35	57	20	53	41
Communicating with elected officials	25	38	18	36	24
Participating in chat groups or bulletin boards to discuss political and community events	16	25	11	17	21

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6. Citizenship's Future

The involvement, or lack of involvement, of GenXers in strengthening communities and building civic life will have a substantial impact on what America looks like in the near future. Luckily for the nation, they seem ready to demand that Americans live up to their responsibilities.

- 61 percent think most Americans do not live up to their responsibilities as citizens (54 percent overall).
- 69 percent think we focus more on the individual than on the community (59 percent overall).
- 83 percent think there should be more emphasis on community, even if it puts more demands on individuals (79 percent overall).

These numbers indicate that GenXers hunger for stronger communities. GenXers have even higher rates of support for government initiatives that would encourage the strengthening of civic life.

- 90 percent support placing college students who receive government funded work study jobs out doing community service rather than in on-campus jobs (84 percent overall)
- 94 percent support requiring Democracy Education in service and civics as a graduation requirement for all high school students (90 percent overall)
- 89 percent support expanding AmeriCorps so that all young Americans who want to participate can have the opportunity (82 percent overall)

In addition, GenXers are decidedly more optimistic about the role of technology in rebuilding our civic life than the population at large. As one might expect from a generation comfortable with the New Economy, GenXers are believers in the power of technology to bring people closer together and improve civic participation.

A whopping 64 percent believe that new technology has brought people closer together, as opposed to a mere 29 percent that believes it has more isolated the population (43 percent/49 percent overall).✧

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What Works

Communities across the country have started to adapt our civic life for the next century with exciting new ideas. Here we shine the spotlight on three ideas that are strengthening our public values:

- The Jane Addams School in Minnesota — weaving new immigrants into the fabric of our common culture.
- The Time Dollar concept — building bonds of mutual obligation one person at a time.
- The Indianapolis Front Porch Alliance — leveraging government action by working with neighborhood and religious organizations.

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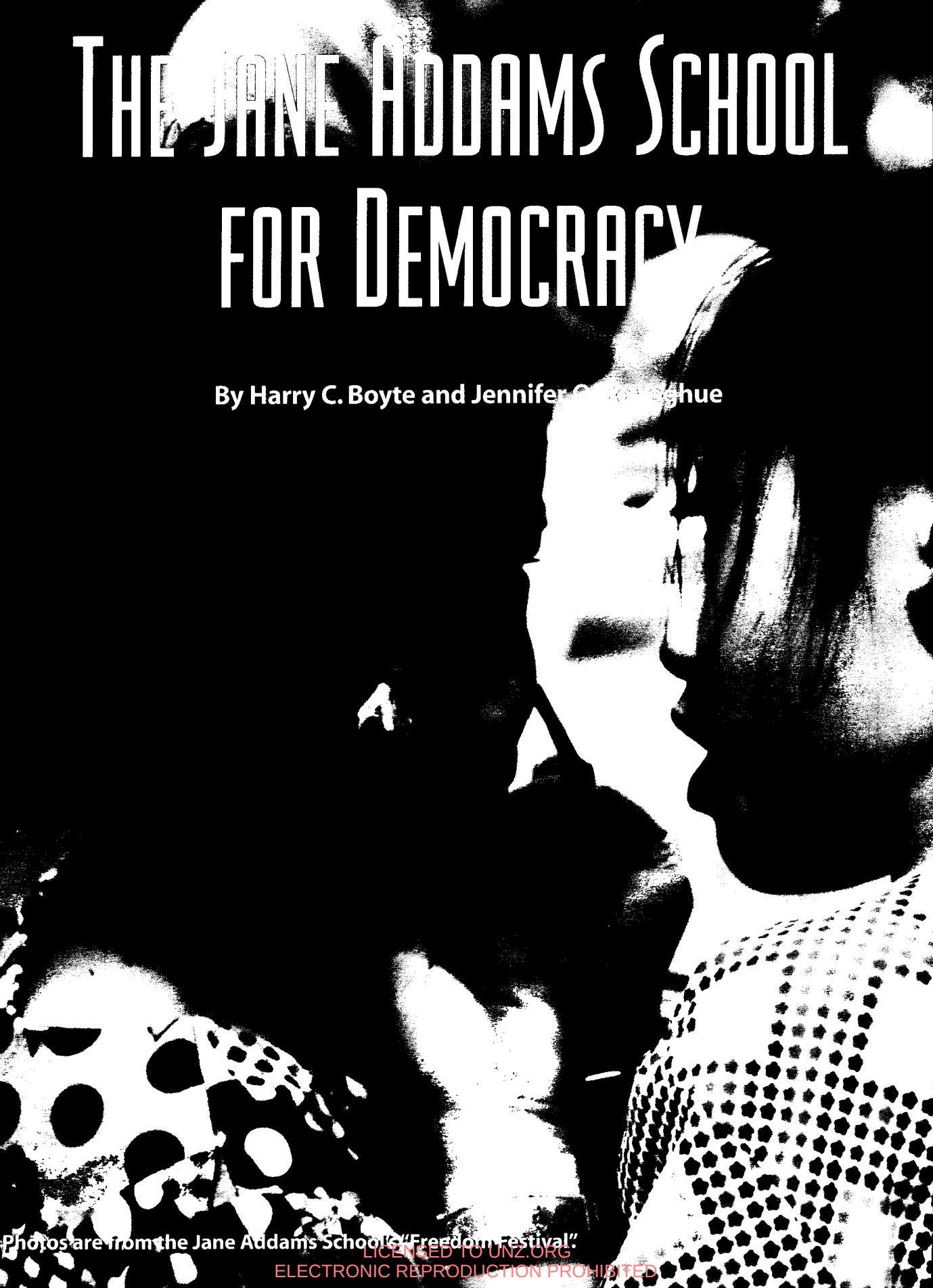
The Jane Addams School for Democracy

By Harry C. Boyte and Jennifer [illegible]ghue



Photos are from the Jane Addams School's "Freedom Festival".

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The largest wave of immigration since World War II is flowing into the United States. Like immigrants throughout our history, many of these new arrivals will settle in separate cultural and ethnic communities, leading to racial and ethnic tension and the perception among the larger population that immigrants do not want to "become American." Yet how can immigrants become connected to public life when so few institutions link them to the broad mainstream of society?

As we begin the next century, the nation needs contemporary versions of older "mediating institutions" that once tied waves of immigrants to American democracy — tapping into their rich cultural traditions and releasing their potential to help build the nation. The Jane Addams School for Democracy, a community-based education and action initiative, offers a promising experiment.

Today, immigrant policy accents service delivery — be it of language classes, job training, or welfare provisions. In this approach, immigrants are perceived as deficient, needy, and powerless. The role of organizations is to provide services for them. Immigrants enter public life largely as consumers and claimants, demanding their "right" to a fair share. There

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are few opportunities for new Americans to develop the sense that they can contribute to the commonwealth. Within this framework, they are encouraged to compete in an arena of grievances and deficiencies. Most groups that connect people to politics are built around ideological sameness, not diversity of viewpoint, and they pose their arguments in consumer terms: What can their group get from government?

Mediating institutions such as Jane Addams' Hull House settlement in Chicago — which worked with immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe and Mexico in the early decades of the 20th century — once taught something quite different. They inculcated new Americans with a sense of the importance of building, contributing to, and improving the nation.

Such institutions helped immigrants develop what can be called "public identities" — teaching the skills of give and take, instilling the importance of working with people different from oneself, fostering a commitment to democracy, and holding citizens accountable to common standards. It is a mistake to romanticize or be nostalgic. Even at their best they excluded many people. Nonetheless, they were central to 20th century democracy. They provided reserves of civic capital that the nation could draw on. For immigrants, they created pride in being American citizens and highlighted the ways in which immigrant cultures could enrich America.

The Jane Addams School for Democracy — located in Neighborhood House, a 100-year-old settlement on the West Side of St. Paul — takes the best of this forgotten spirit and updates it for a new era. It was created as a partnership among Hmong and Latino residents, Neighborhood House, the College of St. Catherine, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute, and the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. The founding idea was to develop a community partnership through which college students and immigrants alike could learn and work together.

The theme of the Jane Addams School is "everyone a learner, everyone a teacher." New immigrants

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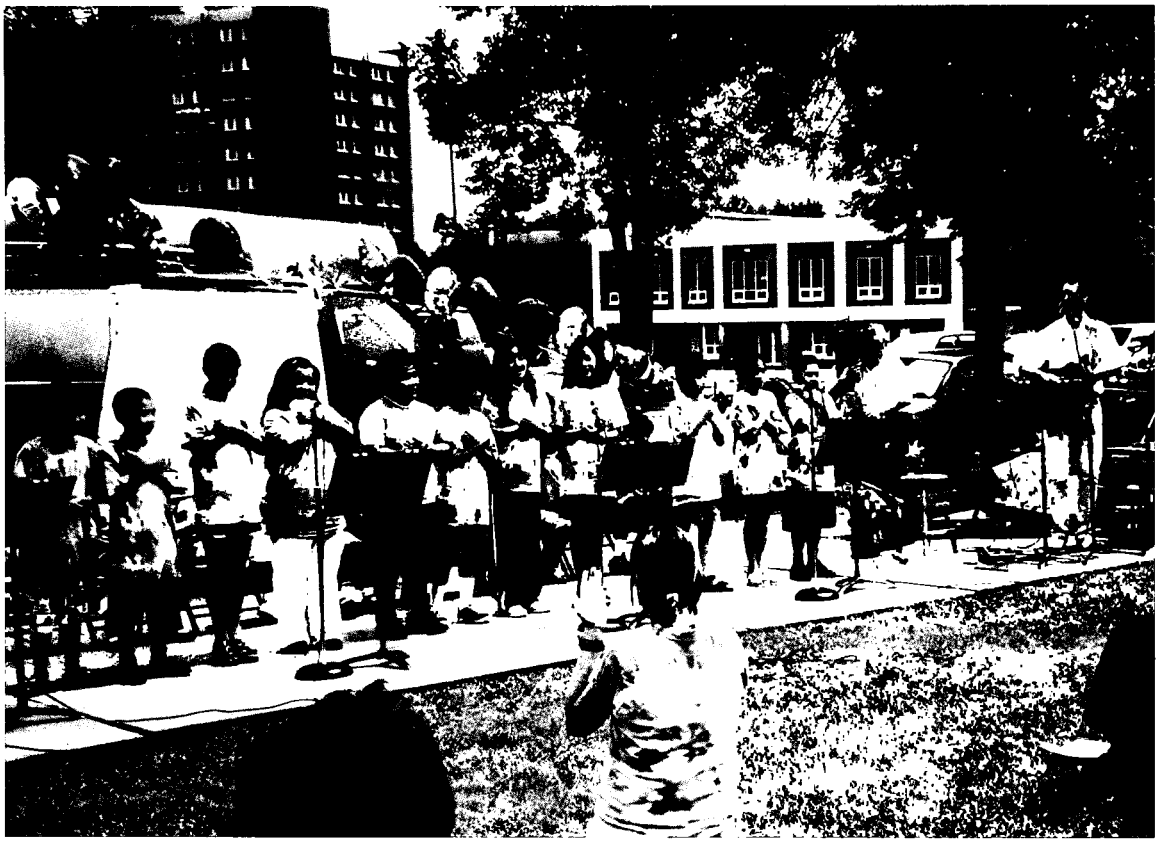

and their children join with high school and college students in learning about citizenship and democracy (including preparing for the U.S. Citizenship Exam), the English language, and American culture. Now, after two and a half years, nearly 200 people are learning and working together on public projects. Young people and adults have undertaken farming projects, community gardens, plays, skits, a history book, a health and wellness project, and other work. The school has initiated an annual community-wide "Freedom Festival" celebrating diverse contributions to liberty and democracy. In addition, more than 50 immigrants have passed the citizenship exam (a striking accomplishment, sometimes involving years of dedicated work, for people coming from an oral culture). Best of all, many of these new citizens have returned to the School both to continue their learning and to help other immigrants learn the ways of American citizenship.

Perhaps most important, the Jane Addams School provides a space for immigrants and their children to build off the strength of their cultures while learning about and incorporating aspects of American culture. As Aleida Benitez, one of the architects of the school, says, "It is important to find common ground between the traditional values my parents instilled in me and the larger world in which I find myself."

The work of the school has made vivid the traditions of productive citizenship that immigrants bring to this country. In the words of one Jane Addams School participant, Mai Neng Moua: "America is in the making. It isn't a complete picture, and whoever comes adds to it." Organizations like the Jane Addams School can help all citizens draw a brighter and more vivid picture of a united nation and a re-energized democracy.✧

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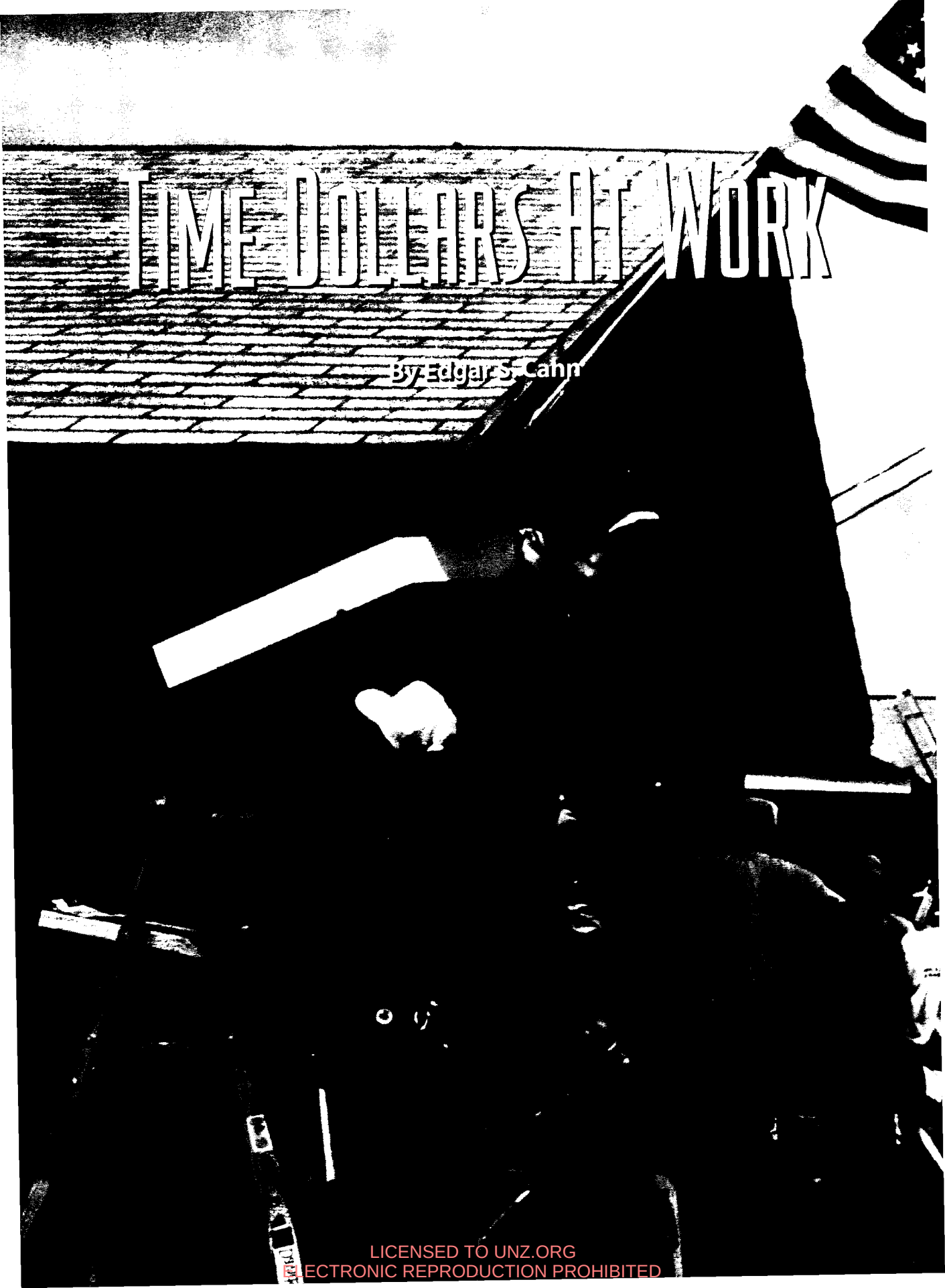
TIME DOLLARS AT WORK

By Edgar S. Cahn



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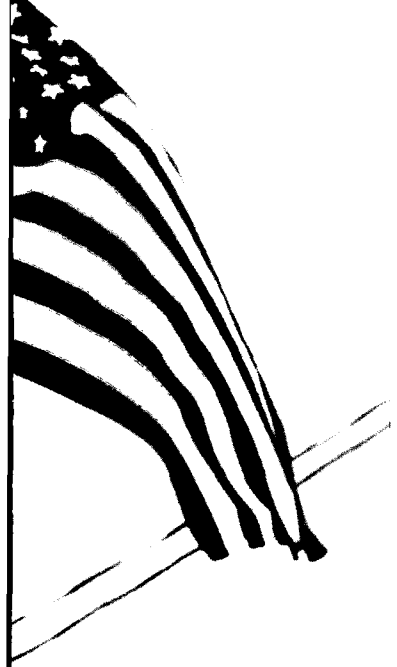

Traditional entitlements are perceived as undermining the work ethic. If that is the case, is there a method of social service delivery where Americans see their role as contributors and co-producers of democracy, social justice, healthy communities, and strong families? Time Dollars, a new idea being introduced in communities around the nation and the world, do just that.

Time Dollars are private credits backed and distributed by local non-profit organizations. Time Dollars record, store, and reward transactions where neighbors help neighbors. People earn Time Dollars by using their skills and resources to help others — by providing child or elder care, transportation, cooking, home improvement. The idea is simple: One hour of service equals one Time Dollar. In turn, people spend Time Dollars to get similar help for themselves or their families when the time comes that they need it. Time Dollars can also be redeemed at clubs that gives people discounts on food or health care.

Time Dollars empower any person to convert personal time into purchasing power — stretching limited cash dollars further and matching unused capacity with unmet demand. They reinforce

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Edgar S. Cahn, Co-Founder and Co-Dean of Antioch School of Law and Special Counsel to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, is President of the Time Dollar Institute.

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Photograph by Scott Suchman

reciprocity and trust. They reward civic engagement and acts of decency in a way that generates social capital, one hour at a time. They are bringing people together in communities all around the nation.

There are many reasons why Time Dollars are an idea whose time has come:

First, Time Dollars create the functional equivalent of an extended family in an era in which many families are too small, too fragile, or too dispersed to perform the functions we once counted on them to fulfill.

Second, Time Dollars generate and reward the reciprocity and civic engagement that are the essential components of social capital. They can play a role in rebuilding the infrastructure of trust and caring that creates safe neighborhoods and healthy communities.

Third, social programs — governmental, non-profit, and private sector — fail if they cannot generate sustained participation by the recipient: students, patients, beneficiaries, at-risk groups. If that participation and labor is essential, we need to define it as work and reward it accordingly.

Fourth, government and human service professionals pay attention to people who bring problems, needs, and deficiencies. That inadvertently rewards dependency. We need to shift from "problem-centered" to "asset-centered" responses that enable even the most troubled to pay back by helping others and to secure

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rewards by using their strengths to contribute to the well-being of all.

Fifth, Time Dollars can leverage the charity and pro bono work that businesses already provide by requiring recipients to pay for them in-kind — with volunteer work of their own.

Time Dollars supply a strategy for performing all of these tasks. The exchanges they generate, record, and compensate convert human capacity into the kinetic energy needed to strengthen families, rebuild community, and enhance the quality of civic life. Time Dollars are in use in more than 100 communities in 30 states and three countries (the United States, Great Britain, and Japan). Here are some snapshots of the most innovative practices:

- Chicago: More than 1,000 students in 17 elementary schools have earned recycled computers loaded with software by tutoring younger students. The price: 110 Time Dollars (10 have to be earned by the parent). Older students, regardless of their own academic problems, expect and get high performance from younger students.

- Washington, D.C.: For fifteen years, the pastor of a local Baptist church was relied on for guidance, comfort, or just a little conversation. However, when the Reverend — who suffers from diabetes — lost his right leg to an infection, he retired from the church. Overwhelmed by the sudden changes in his life, he lived as a recluse — refusing to leave his apartment. The local Time Dollar program helped him adjust to the seemingly insurmountable problems he faced. Once again an active member of the community, he earns Time Dollars by conducting prayer services for his fellow tenants, and he spends them to have his meals prepared by another volunteer.

- Brooklyn: Seniors insured through Elderplan, a social Health Maintenance Organization, can cash in Time Dollars for a 25 percent discount on their health insurance by helping other seniors to remain self-sufficient. Seniors provide their own informal support system, including pain management seminars, telephone bingo, home repairs, shopping, rides, and peer counseling. Elderplan now offers a Time Dollar redemption catalog so members can cash in their Time Dollars for health and beauty equipment, taxi vouchers, and social events.

- Baltimore: The Housing Authority has incorporated Time Dollars as part of the rent that residents have to pay through community service. Children can earn Time Dollars and pay up to 50 percent of the monthly Time Dollar rent.

- Washington, D.C.: A Time Dollar Youth Court brings first offenders before a jury of their peers. Jurors earn Time Dollars as they hear cases and impose sentences that may include community service, restitution, an apology, writing an essay, and jury duty. They redeem the Time Dollars for computers recycled by other youth at three high schools. In those public housing complexes where a jury pool has been formed, a new peer culture enables one youngster to hold another accountable for their actions.

- St. Louis: Grace Hill has established a network of stores where Time Dollars will purchase items such as toilet paper, tissues, shampoo, conditioner, bug spray, and detergent. There is even a resident college where Time Dollars pay the tuition.

Time Dollars are a way to compensate and reward the work that ultimately determines the future of this nation: the work that goes into building a vibrant democracy. For too long, we have taken such work for granted — treated it like pure water and clean air — as if it would always be available in abundance. Now we know that the values and virtues of civic life must be developed and carefully guarded. With Time Dollars we can create the currency for a society where reciprocal obligations are the coin of the realm.✧

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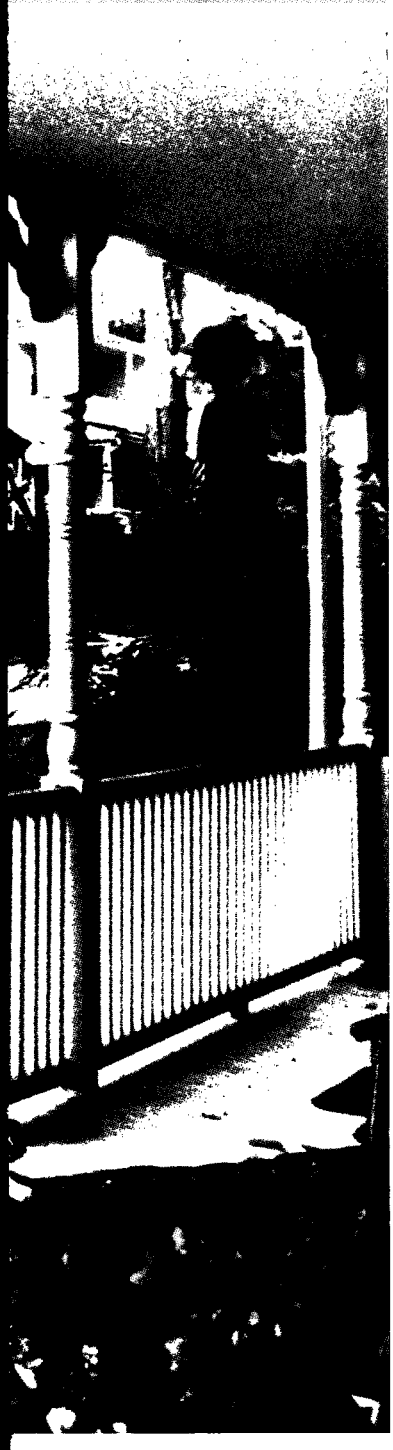

Caring for Our Civic Souls:

Indianapolis' Front Porch Alliance

By Olgen Williams

In a community on the near eastside of Indianapolis, a central alleyway had served for years as a marketplace for drug dealers and an escape route for criminals. Last year, a local minister decided that enough was enough.

He contacted the Front Porch Alliance, a local organization that partners community organizations with government agencies, and suggested turning the alley into a park — an idea area residents loved, but one too grand for them to achieve alone. Though city government, if convinced, could construct the park, its work would not be as effective without the community's support. The Front Porch Alliance forged a partnership between the two. It coordinated over 50 city agencies, local businesses, and volunteer groups to build the park. Today, the drug dealers and criminals are gone — and the park stands as a testimony to the power of this partnership.

The Front Porch Alliance doesn't run programs. Instead, it responds to problems in the community that no program would have the foresight to resolve. The Front Porch Alliance is a partnership between City Hall and the values-shaping institutions of Indianapolis. It coordinates civic groups and government agencies to empower local communities to run their own programs to improve Indianapolis' neighborhoods. In the past two years, it has facilitated relationships between more than 400 churches, synagogues, neighborhood associations, and businesses. It works to secure private

---

Olgen Williams is a resident of Haughville in Indianapolis' near west side and Co-Chair of the Front Porch Alliance Roundtable. He is Executive Director of Christamore House, which runs a variety of programs for neighborhood residents of all ages. He is also Vice-Chairman of WESCO, an urban neighborhood organization that has attracted national attention for its community policing arrangement and other innovations.

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resources for civic organizations, and, when appropriate, it finds public resources as well. Working from the principle that government must first do no harm to the institutions of civil society, it enables them to expand the good work they already do.

The Civic Landscape

Having lived in Indianapolis for 37 years, I have witnessed firsthand the suffering inflicted on our weakest citizens by several decades of crime, drug use, fleeing businesses, poor health services, and broken homes. I have also seen neighborhoods rise up from this destruction, and I know what is required to revitalize them.

Government "solutions," no matter how well intentioned, are not enough to empower people. Real solutions are found when common people work together to create results. In order to bring health to our communities, there must be cooperation between government agencies, churches, synagogues, neighborhood organizations, labor unions, charities, businesses, and citizens.

Neighborhood organizations, churches, and local businesses — together with government — are able to leverage substantial change in their communities. The trouble is that these groups are often disconnected from each other, unaware of how much more they could achieve by working together.

Instead of connecting these local institutions to each other and to the resources they need, government often blocks progress in neighborhoods by bringing in its own solutions without listening to the people on the ground. This doesn't mean that government should throw up its hands and walk away — leaving the problems in someone else's lap. Government can play a *positive* role by helping community-based groups form the partnerships they need to succeed in the work they are doing. That is the simple, but strong, conviction at the heart of Indianapolis' Front Porch Alliance.

A West Side Story

The Front Porch Alliance has aided community efforts in my neighborhood on the west side of Indianapolis. It helped us begin our new community center by donating computers, assisting in grant-writing, and organizing fund raisers. It helped a local church to convert a former crack house into a drug counseling center by providing resources and partnerships. It helped the center renovate its building and train its staff by building relationships with a local hospital and businesses.

In another neighborhood, the Front Porch Alliance has helped a 60-member business association partner with police to provide overtime hours, a bike patrol, and "officer trading cards" that familiarize young people in the community with their officers. Crime is down 10 percent in the neighborhood because, as one police chief said, "The attitudes between the residents and police have changed 180 degrees."

Because of the Front Porch Alliance, more than 40 religious congregations provide tutoring, mentoring, and after-school activities for 20 public schools. A battered women's shelter is able to offer services to clients' children because area churches provide needed transportation. Almost 30 religious congregations have adopted city blocks that they now patrol, clean, and take responsibility for.

For many years it seemed that government ignored the work of churches, community groups, and organizations like the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Big Brother/Big Sister programs. Now, in Indianapolis, the Front Porch Alliance is working with these community-building institutions to invigorate the soul of our city and help them perform their life-transforming work.✧

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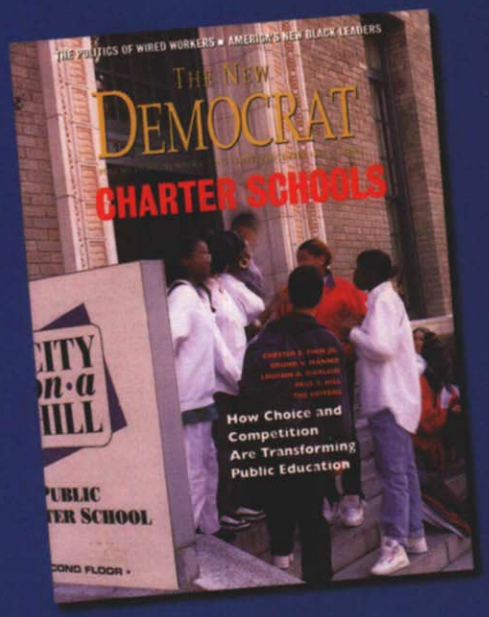
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